

XVII

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THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS AND CONSUL WILLIAM GIFFORD PALGRAVE OF TREBIZOND

For My Parents

«In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the House of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth upon my hand, and I bow myself in the House of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the House of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing».

II Kings, v, 18.

In gratitude for his healing of leprosy, Naaman the Syrian converted to the worship of the God of Israel. His question to the prophet Elisha was what he should do about his new private faith when, back in Syria, he was called upon publicly to follow that of his master the king, who would lean upon him and sacrifice instead to Baal called Rimmon, the storm-God of Damascus. To this historic question and dilemma, Elisha, thaumaturge and Baal-fighter, came up with a judicious and evasive reply: he told Naaman to «Go in peace».

In 1338 the conquered Christian population of Nicaea put the same problem to Patriarch John XIV Kalekas. His reply was certainly less evasive than Elisha's but may have been less judicious. For those who did not seek martyrdom and were outwardly converted to Islam, he assured that: "As many as wish to live in secret practising and keeping in their heart the Christian way, because of fear of punishment against them, these also shall attain salvation"¹. The patriarch may be forgiven for overlooking Christ's words to Peter: "Whosoever shall deny me be-

1. F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana. Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani*, I, Vienna 1860, 183-4. Cf. N. E. Meliores, *Oi νεωτεροχριστιανοί*, Athens 1962, 38-9; and S. Vryonis Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1971, 341-2. This paper is

fore men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven». But he may not be forgiven, perhaps, for playing with fire, for his answer, which is commonly taken as the earliest evidence for crypto-Christianity in the Ottoman state, in fact reads as an incitement to enter that hazardous limbo. When in 1331 Sultan Orhan had taken Nicaea, he had encouraged his soldiers to take Greek wives — Byzantines habitually lost their daughters, their language and their faith in that order². But it may be that, in those decades of wholesale conversion in Bithynia, with no recorded martyrs and before a formal recognition by faith of a *Rum millet*, things were more tolerant in practice. In 1354 St Gregory Palamas had his famous debate with a mullah in Nicaea and reported on the Judaising *Chiones* there, and John VI Kantakouzenos as the monk and anti-Islamic polemicist Joasaph boasted that his daughter, who married Orhan in 1346, publicly encouraged reversion to Christianity in

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2. Matthew, X, 33; Asikpaşazade, trans. R. F. Kreutel, *Vom Hirtenzelt zur Hohen Pforte*, Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1959, 68. The nadir of Christian fortunes in Nicaea was seen by John Covell (1638-1722) in his unpublished report of 22 February 1677, in BM Add. MS 22914, f. 15: «When we came to town I desired to lodge at a Greek house if possible; we were at last brought to ye Greek Church, where ye papas hearing strangers enquiring for him ran and hid himself; but with many good words and intreatyes we at last got a lodging at a poor woman's house; there are not above 10 Greek families here now left, and about 50 Armenians, ye rest are all Turkes; none of the Greeks know how to speak their own tong, the papas himself, who (after he was better informed and his fear was over) came to us and beg'd our excuse, could understand well enough what we spoke to him in Greek, but would by no means answer to us in the same language, the continually practising onlerly Turkish, have in a manner quite forgot their own. He hath got by heart the formes of baptism, and ye words of consecration of ye Eucharist and some part of ye office for Buriall and the like; and severall prayers, he hath by heart of their Mattins and Vespers, and with these he makes a shift to entertain the hearers, though neither he nor they understand one word in twenty. I was to hear him say Vespers, and he said ye *Pater hemon*, ye *megale kai mikre synapte*, and the *Theotoke parthene*. He would not say ten lines right. Yet as to ye formality of the action he imitated ye rest of ye papas in other places; and here he came out to blesse and incense (or perfume) ye people he always had no other words than ye *Theotoke parthene*; which he galloped over and over till he was many times quite out of breath; he was the most miserably poor, and the saddest ignorant soul that ever I yet met, with all in Greece». But the Pontic crypto-Christians reversed the common order reported by Covell: they dined with their faith, kept their language (only one Karamanli book survives in the Soumela library), and converted their Muslim brides (Appendix: Document 1).

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Ottoman Bithynia. He should have known the rules, for his principal informant was the monk Meletios who began life among the Muslim *ulema* of Orhan's Bursa³. The rules were deceptively simple. Conversion to Islam was indicated by raising the Finger of Attestation and pronouncing the *esed*; reversion to Christianity was impossible, or rather led, until the *Tanzimat* of 1839, to death. The Greek and Armenian neo-martyrologies record a number of those who paid the price, with peaks in the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among the last were Athanasios of Smyrna in 1819 and George of Ioannina in 1838⁴.

Although there were no martyrs after 1839, the *Tanzimat* was only the beginning of the end. A better date is 18 February 1856, when Sultan Abdul Mecit neatly anticipated the Treaty of Paris of 30 March by issuing the *Hatt-i Hümayun*. The effect of both was that the Porte reaffirmed the principle of freedom of religion within the Ottoman Empire, and a watching brief to see that it was not left a dead letter was transferred from the Russian Tsar to the victorious allies of the Crimean War. What the allies had not bargained for was the number of supposed Christians, supposedly registered as Muslims, who now emerged out of the woodwork to declare themselves under British and French—and Russian—protection. The first was Petros Savvas Sideropoulos who on 14

3. A. Bryer, «Greek historians on the Turks: the case of the first Ottoman-Byzantine marriages», in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, Oxford 1981, 488; on the *Chiones*, who may echo William Gifford Palgrave's original family name, see now M. Balivet, «Byzantins judaïsants et Juifs islamisés: des "Kühân" (Kâhin) aux "Χιόνος" (Χιόνος)», *Byzantion*, 52 (1982), 24-59.

4. For the perils of reconversion, see P. Ricaut, *The present state of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, London 1679, 287-9. Leontios Makhairas, *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled "Chronicle"*, ed. R. M. Dawkins, Oxford 1932 (reprinted Famagusta, n.d.), I, 22-3; II, 52-3 (for the Finger of Attestation). On neo-martyrologies, which would repay further study, see the *Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον*, Venice 1799; the Armenian equivalent, H. Manandian and H. Adjarian, *Hayots Nor Vekaneere* (1155-1843), Vagharshapat-Etchmiadzin 1903; H. Delehayé, «Greek Neo-Martyrs», *The Constructive Quarterly*, 9 (1921), 701-12; R. Clogg, «A little-known Orthodox neo-martyr, Athanasios of Smyrna (1819)», *Eastern Churches Review*, 5 (1973), 28-36. It was only on 13 April 1844 that G. A. Stevens, Acting Consul in Trebizond, was able to write to his Ambassador, Stratford Canning, that «I have the honor to receive your Excellency's Circular of the 26th Ultimo, informing me that Your Excellency had received a formal engagement from the Sublime Porte that no Christian shall, in future, be executed, or otherwise made to suffer death in Turkey, for having apostasized from Islamism. . .» (PRO FO 195.225, No. 27). Addendum: see now: N. Russell, «Neomartyrs of the Greek Calendar», *Sobornost*, 5 (1983), 36-62.

May 1856 declared his Christian faith before Hayreddin pasha of Trebizond and lived to tell the tale. On 15 July 1857 a total of forty-four crypto-Christian leaders sealed an appeal to the Porte and ambassadors of the five major Christian Powers, as a result of which the British embassy in Constantinople asked its Acting Vice-Consul in Trebizond for further details, which George Stevens provided in the despatch published as Document 1 in the Appendix to this article, together with details of the whereabouts of about 17,260 "Kurumlis" or crypto-Christians which are summarised on the map on p. 68⁵. The Kurumlis came down from the mountains to Trebizond, where Uzun Sokak ("Long Street") runs from the European consultates to the Ottoman *konak*; local Turks gibed: "Uzun sokak, çamur oldu / Krumlilar gavur oldu". «Long Street has turned to mud / The Kurumlis have turned infidel»⁶.

These people who emerged as secret Christians in 1857 and throughout the nineteenth century had a number of names: *meso-meso*, *paramesoi* and *dipistia*; in Serbia *droversivo*; in Cyprus *patsaloi* (piebalds), *apostoliki* (wild carobs) or *linovamvakoi* (linen-cottons); in Albania *laramanoi* (motleys); there were the crypto-Maronites of the Lebanon and crypto-Copts of Cairo; the Kourmoulides of Crete and Kouroumlides (Kurumlis), Stavriotai, Santaoi, or just *klostoi*, or closet-Christians of the Pontos⁷.

The French were quicker to investigate the consequences of the *Hatt-i Hümayun*, particularly the Muslim reaction, than the British. Napoleon III dabbled personally in schemes in Syria, where his agent was, from 1855-63, a Jesuit called Père Michel Sohail. Sohail's career is almost a paradigm of those who lived in the half-world of Rimmon and is a counterpoint to the wider fate of the crypto-Christians. Himself a convert in India, Sohail first proposed to convert the Assassin chieftain, Sheikh Ahmed, the "Old Man of the Mountain", to Roman Catholicism, when he would petition for Napoleonic protection. At first sight the plan looks

5. R. Janin, «Musulmans malgré eux: les Stavriotes», *Echos d'Orient*, 15 (1912), 501; the Greek version of the document of 15 July 1857 in Chrysanthos (Philippides), «Η Ἐκκλησία Τραπεζοῦντος», *Ἀρχαίων Πόντου*, 4-5 (1933), pl. 110.

6. Meliores, 27 n.1; cf. Selina Ballance, A. Bryer and D. Winfield, «Nineteenth-century Monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes», Part 1, *Ἀρχαίων Πόντου*, 28 (1966), 268.

7. Cf. A. Bryer, «The Pontic Revival and the New Greece», in *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Independence (1821-1830): Continuity and Change*, ed. J. Petropoulos et al., Thessalonike 1976 = *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos*, Collected Studies (CS), London 1980, XII, 176.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

as unlikely as St. Francis's to convert the Sultan of Egypt in 1219. In fact the Assassin chieftain expressed himself quite taken with the political side of the idea, but the abbé Sohail seems to have even more attracted by the sheikh's account of the secrets of the Ismaili faith — a bad sign. At all events, Sohail's local plans were frustrated in 1859 when he narrowly escaped the Druse massacre in Damascus of 3,000 Maronites and their patriarch. In 1860 he was back in Paris proposing an Egyptian-Syrian union under French protection, before which he was to report on the Arabian hinterland. For two years Sohail passed as Salim abu Mahmud al Eys, a Damascene doctor, travelling from Gaza to Muscat and making contact with Riyadh and the Wahabis. Depending on his readership, Sohail was always a trifle ingenuous as to what religion he was observing at any particular time. He knew when Christmas 1862 came round, but of necessity did not observe it, or mention any other Christian feast in his Arabian sojourn. In 1865 he specifically recommended bowing down in the House of Rimmon and later maintained that he had lived as a Muslim in the mosques of Cairo in 1861, but the rumour that the Jesuit agent had gone so far as to act as an *imam* was denied in an obituary. Sohail certainly began as a crypto-Christian; it is impossible to tell how far he became a Muslim⁸.

There are many parallels in this twilight world. Most tellingly recorded is that of Athanasios Nikitin, Russian and Orthodox merchant of Tver, who in 1466 set off to trade with the Tatars and ended up in India. His account starts with a regular Russian invocation: «For the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, thy sinful servant, Athanasios, Nikita's son». But the closing prayer of his diary, six years later in 1472, is in a sort of Arabic and runs: «God knows the rest! Allah the Protector knows, amen. In the name of Allah the Merciful and Benificent, God is great! God is good! . . . Peace be with thee. God is great. There is no God but Allah, the Creator. . . » Almost unwittingly, Athanasios recorded three stages of his entry into the twilight. «The great feast of Christ's Resurrection is not known to me; I deduce it by signs — the great Christian holiday comes nine or ten days before the Muslim holiday. I have nothing with me, no books. . . I have forgotten the Christian faith and the Christian holidays. . . I am between

8. W. G. Palgrave, *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia* (1862-63), London 1866, I, 5, 15, 258, 263-7; 11, 22-3, 200, 265, 343, 346; Mea Allen, *Palgrave of Arabia*, London 1972, 137-86, 272; J.A.H., s.n. «William Gifford Palgrave», *Dictionary of National Biography*.

faiths». Without books it is difficult to remain Orthodox in a Muslim land; and, like Sohail, Athanasios also assumed a Muslim name and observed Muslim feasts and fasts. But neither makes one a Muslim, as a *melik* pointed out to Athanasios; the second stage. Athanasios (*alias* hodja Yusuf Khorasani) said to him: "Sir! You pray and I also pray; you offer five prayers and I offer three prayers. I am a foreigner and you are a native". He replied to me: "In truth, you seem not to be a Muslim, but you know not the Christian faith". In the third stage, Athanasios seems to end up by denying the Incarnation: "Jesus is the spirit of Allah, peace be with thee"⁹.

There is a common ground enough between Islam and Christianity, some of it bridged in the Ottoman Empire by local cults, a noman's land over which crypto-Christians, Alevis and others could stray without much internal hindrance. The Ottoman conquests decapitated the Byzantine mandarin and aristocratic superstructure, leaving a popular Anatolian culture which is common to both Christian and Muslim peasants. But the edges of the noman's land are defined by observance just as much as by formal acts of conversion. Athanasios overstepped the Christian mark, but never reached Islam; Father Sohail became an Islamic fellow-traveler at the very least, but in his voluminous writings never tells us where he left Christianity.

Conversion is not as simple as Ottoman registrars would have liked and is a good deal more complex than Athanasios, and one suspects, even the Jesuit Sohail, may have thought. I exclude the minority of enthusiasts who convert through revelation, or even (like the Kydones brothers) through reason. Few mortals are granted light on the road to Damascus or a sign at the Milvian Bridge. Most converts convert through external factors, but they are choosy. They expect their new faith to equal, or improve upon, their expectations of their old. A recent study of medieval conversion to Islam enunciated another axiom, that "leaving aside ecstatic converts, no one willingly converts from one religion to another if by virtue of conversion he markedly lowers his social status"¹⁰. This goes for crypto-Christians too, in which case I will have to ask why many showed a reluctance to profess their supposed private faith when

9. K. H. Meyer, *Die Fahrt des Athanasius Nikitin über die drei Meere: Reise eines Russischen Kaufmannes nach Ostindien (1466-1472)*, Leipzig n.d.; Gail Lenhoff, «Beyond Three Seas: Afanasij Nikitin's Journey from Orthodoxy to Apostasy», *East European Quarterly*, 13 (1979), 431-47.

10. R. W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period. An Essay in Quantitative History*, Cambridge, Mass.-London 1979, 35.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

it became publicly safe to do so — for example the “*linovamvakoi*” of Cyprus, who are said still to survive in odd pockets, after the British occupied the island in 1878¹¹.

At first sight it looks as if Ottoman Islam held all the trump cards over Byzantine Orthodoxy, for it was the Greeks who had most to lose and gain. Speros Vryonis has catalogued the shockingly swift evaporation of Anatolian Orthodoxy before the fourteenth century, not so much through the seductive teaching of mullahs and, later, unorthodox dervishes, but after the church lost its economic and political base¹². Where, for example, the three major monasteries of the Pontic (and future crypto-Christian) hinterland retained exceptionally their lands after the Ottoman conquest of 1461-78 there was hope; where in Trebizond itself the major monasteries lost their endowments there was little future, and only two priests were registered as such in the city in 1583¹³. On the whole it is the Melkite Churches which have most at risk and those without imperial pretensions — Coptic, Armenian or Syrian — which held their numbers better.

How many Byzantine Orthodox slipped through the net in the process of conversion is not known, for the net is that of late fifteenth — and early sixteenth-century *tahrir defters* which are hardly confessional or inquisitorial records, but concerned with a subject's faith only because it concerned his fiscal or military obligations and administrative status. For the registrars there could be no intermediate religious category. While probably all those registered as “sons of Abdullah” were new converts,

11. R. N. L. Michell, «A Muslim-Christian Sect in Cyprus», *The Nineteenth Century and After*, 63 (1908), 751-62; H. Luke, *An Eastern Chequerboard*, London 1934, 89; the same's *More Moves on an Eastern Chequerboard*, London 1935, 160; C. P. Kyrris, *Peaceful co-existence in Cyprus under British rule (1878-1959) and after independence*, Nicosia 1977, 9-13.

12. Vryonis, *Decline*, *passim*; H. Wächter, *Der Verfall des Griechentums in Kleinasien im XIV. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1903.

13. H. W. Lowry, *The Ottoman Tahrir Defters as a Source for urban demographic History: the case study of Trabzon (ca. 1486-1583)*, University of California, Los Angeles 1977, 201-3 (a Ph. D. dissertation shortly to be published). Lowry rightly points to the concomitant rise in Muslim occupations and titles registered in the city (37 in 1583). Before 1461 there had been a score of monasteries (and many more churches) open in the city, beside the metropolitanical see. One can only guess how many priests they employed, but their reduction to two by 1583 may be less dramatic than it appears, for only 1% of the Christian population was then designated by occupation. Two monasteries, and the metropolitanical see, survived, which should have employed more than two priests. See A. Bryer, «Some Trapezuntine monastic obits (1368-1563)», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 34 (1976) = *CS*, IX, 129.

the patronymic may not include all converts, especially in the Pontos and perhaps in Bulgaria, where former Christians were slow to adopt Muslim names. Nor is the fact that a subject bears arms, or is even a *timar*-holder, an automatic proof he was Muslim in the early days: in Albania and the Pontos both were often still Christian for a generation or two after the conquest¹⁴.

So we must be very careful how to define the crypto-Christians, especially those who emerged in 1857. By the most romantic, yet commonest, definition, they were descendants of those Byzantines who *ex animo* kept their secret faith and hated the Islam which they publicly professed. They were living martyrs. Now it is no joke bowing down in the House of Rimmon, and doing it generation after generation from Byzantine to Victorian times. So to Dawkins, the most important crypto-Christian group of all, the Kurumlis and Stavriotai of the Pontos, whom he knew well, were "most earnestly Christian. These people felt that they represented a remnant of the high civilization of their country and that only by concealment could they be kept together"¹⁵.

The earliest particular example of the type is a Palaiologan princess who was sent as third *hatun* to the Kipchak *han* Muhammed Özbeg. Ibn Battutah describes her return to Constantinople to have a child in 1332. At the Byzantine border she abandoned her portable mosque and started eating pork and drinking wine: «Inner sentiments, concealed hitherto, suffered a change through our entry into the land of infidelity»¹⁶.

But one princess does not create a secret people, nor do I see real crypto-Christianity in contemporary Bithynia, but the growing pains inescapable among a majority absorbing the faith and culture of a conquering minority in a generation or two. There is no doubt that whatever secret flames Patriarch Kalekas had fanned had long flickered out by the nineteenth century.

14. V. L. Ménage, «Seven Ottoman documents from the reign of Mehemmed II», in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. M. Stern, Oxford 1965, 112-8; contribution by H. Lowry in *Continuity and Change in late Byzantine and early Ottoman Society*, edd. A. Bryer and H. Lowry, Birmingham-Dumbarton Oaks 1983, forthcoming.

15. R. M. Dawkins, «The Crypto-Christians of Turkey», *Byzantion*, 8 (1933), 274; cf. E. Pears, *Turkey and its Peoples*, London 1911, 267: «There is no reason to doubt the tradition of the Stavriotai that their ancestors had the choice of accepting Mahometanism or death. They chose the first and still continued to be Christians at heart».

16. *The travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-54*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, II, London 1962, 501.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Nineteenth-century accounts of the crypto-Christians after they had emerged have the air of well-worn anecdote, but are consistent. They had held double names, Christian and Muslim (where Mehmet or Ali was avoided). They were baptised and kept fasts, but underwent *sünnet* and had two marriages, with a Christian *koumbaros* and a Muslim master of ceremonies. Their daughters did not marry out and Muslim brides brought in were secretly baptised. They went to mosque in Ramadan; sometimes they were buried in a Muslim cemetery even — but with a simultaneous Christian service: document 8 and its appendices illustrates the harrowing consequences of attempting a full Christian burial of a former crypto-Christian in 1859, which goes far to confirm later memories. In more easy-going places than Bulancak, where the incident of 1859 took place, hodjas were said to boast of the unnatural good health of their villagers, who never seemed to need burial. Elsewhere the crypto-Christians had a cant language: in front of real Muslims they referred to swine as their "parents-in-law".

Such people have to be taken in turn. In no case can they be traced back to Byzantine times and in most cases there seems to be a local, administrative, explanation, which in many arises more from a natural crypto-Christian wish to get the best of both worlds than be a secret witness to the faith.

First come the modest crypto-Christians of Albania, ably discussed by Skendi, who may prove an exception to the rule¹⁷. Evidence for Catholic Albanian crypto-Christians does not come, however, until 1610. Lady Mary Wortley Montague describes them in a letter from Adrianople in 1717: «These people, living between Christians and Mahometans, and not being skilled in controversy, declare that they are utterly unable to judge which religion is best; but, to be certain of not entirely rejecting the truth, they very prudently follow both. They go to the mosque on Friday and to the church on Sunday, saying for their excuse that at the day of judgement they are sure of protection from the true prophet, but which that is they are not able to determine in this world. I believe that there is no other race of mankind who have so modest an opinion of their own capacity». ¹⁸

Such people may be a little artless, imperfectly converted like the

17. S. Skendi, «Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan area under the Ottomans», in his *Balkan Cultural Studies*, New York 1980, 233-57.

18. *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M--y W-----y M-----e: Written during her Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa...*, London 1785, 68 (letter xxvii).

Armenian Hemşinli who embraced Islam in the fifteenth century and were still baptising, just to be on the safe side, in 1890¹⁹. Or they may have their feet placed neatly in both camps. The Muslim Albanians of Euboia traditionally took Christian wives, but may have been smarter than Lady Mary Wortley Montague thought, for what happens when a Christian marries a Muslim: dowry or brideprice — or both? Albanians certainly knew what they were doing by going to a mosque on a Friday and church on Sunday (like nineteenth-century English villagers who attended their squire's Church for mattins and went to their own evening Chapel)²⁰. Extending the practice geographically, some Albanian transhumants were Muslims in the winter valleys, but Christians in the summer pastures, for the bounds of the Ottoman Empire were not two-dimensional but vertical too, ending (as in the Pontos) at between 1,000 and 2,000 m., above which the mountains offered a kind of freedom²¹. It was not just a seasonal freedom, for Albanians could play their cards both ways: Ottoman tax collectors could find a whole Muslim village refusing to pay *ispence*, while the recruiting officer could find it Christian, eager to pay *harac* in lieu of military service. There are few martyrs to be found here, save among Catholic Albanians and others, of Guilan (Gnjilane) especially, in what is now southern Yugoslavia. In 1703 their bishops excommunicated those of their flock who persisted in following Muslim rites also, and using Muslim as well as Christian names, a verdict confirmed by Pope Benedict XIV in 1754. It drove them into Islam. When in its wisdom the Church of Pope Pius IX incited one thousand or more to renounce Islam in 1847, it is not surprising that,

19. V. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, I, Paris 1890, 12, 120.

20. J. Obelkevich, *Religion and rural society*, Oxford 1976; A. Bryer, «Greeks and Türkmens: the Pontic exceptions», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 29 (1975) = *CS*, V, 135-6.

21. Cf. D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500-1453*, London 1971, 8-9; Albanian information from Dr. J. F. Haldon. The attractive correlation of height and freedom has, however, been taken too much for granted. J. M. Wagstaff, *Settlement and population in the Morea c. 1700-1830. A report on a Project financed by the Social Science Research Council*, Southampton 1981, 17-8, 22, tables 6 and 12, demonstrates that even "new" settlements in the Tourkokratia were mostly low-lying. But in the Pontos the "new" settlements of (1) Kurum, (2) Yağlıdere, (3) Stavri with Zigana, (4) Santa, and (6) Torul, together with many of (5) Chaldia, were coterminous with the crypto-Christian heartland and all lie between 1-2,000 m. above sea level. See the map on p. 68 and in A. Bryer, «The Tourkokratia in the Pontos: some problems and preliminary conclusions», *Neo-Hellenika*, 1 (1970) = *CS*, XI, 30-54.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

despite the representations of France, Britain and Austria, only eight or so survived to be recognised as Catholics two years later²².

I am inclined to think that the *Linovamvakoi* of Cyprus and maybe even the Kourmoulides of Crete are also Catholic, rather than Orthodox in origin. The *Linovamvakoi* represent the lesser Catholics (rather than the Venetian squirearchy) who, after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1571, were forced into limbo by the vengeful Orthodox. Their Church disestablished, they had no *milet* equivalent to that of the Orthodox archbishopric, which the Ottomans now recognised²³. It may be that the Kourmoulides of Crete have the same history, for what Catholics survived there after 1669 would have suffered the same fate. But the Kourmoulides were not described before the eighteenth century and appear to have been a large family — including the four martyrs of Menabes who jumped the gun by raising revolt against the Ottomans in 1824²⁴. They are not to be confused with the Kurumlis (Kouroumlides) of the Pontos, who are the most numerous of all.

In this land there are grey areas, particularly in the mountain pastures where local cults bridged the official Christian and Muslim Orthodoxies. The local Türkmens tend to be Alevi, traditionally secretive about their real beliefs. Soumela monastery in particular was visited by thousands of Muslim (or crypto-Christian?) pilgrims in the nineteenth century, performing an unofficial *hac*, and its shrine of the Meryamana is venerated by Muslims to this day. The Bektashis had preached the equality of all faiths; salvation is won by a man's devotion to his own. Sheikh Bedreddin's rising of 1416 gathered Christian and Muslim peasants alike under the slogan that it is impious to judge between messengers of God²⁵. But the Kurumlis are not to be found in such a syncretism as this.

22. H. F. Tozer, *Researches in the Highlands of Turkey*, I, London 1869, 346-9 (citing Hecquard).

23. H. Luke, *Cyprus under the Turks, 1571-1878*, Oxford 1921 (reprinted London 1969), 13-22; Dawkins, *Byzantium*, 8 (1933), 254-5, 273.

24. R. Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, I, London 1837, 105-8; M. Llewellyn Smith, *The Great Island, A Study of Crete*, London 1965, 78-9.

25. P. Charanis, 'Internal strife in Byzantium during the fourteenth century', *Byzantium*, 15 (1941), 230; but cf. A. Abel, 'La "Réfutation d'un Agarène" de Barthélémy d'Edesse', *Studia Islamica*, 37 (1973), 5-26. On Muslim pilgrimages to Soumela, see Vice-Consul Alfred Biliotti's despatch No. 95 of 17 December 1877 in PRO FO 195/1141; cf. A. Bryer and D. Winfield, 'Nineteenth-century Monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes', Part 3, *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντος*, 30 (1970), 277; and F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I, Oxford 1929, 66.

Perhaps they emerged, as Patriarch John Kalekas implied, in the process of conversion. The happy chance of Heath Lowry's remarkable work on the Ottoman registers of Trebizond reveals the actual process of conversion there in great detail²⁶. In 1461 the city was presumably near 100 % Christian. The Ottomans, always short of Muslims at this stage, and shorter still of Turks, tackled the cities they conquered first, with forced resettlement of Muslims in Christian towns and vice-versa. The results of this first deportation show up in the first Ottoman register of ca. 1486; the city was then 19% Muslim and 81% Christian (mostly Orthodox). But people started drifting back; Greeks back home and Muslims away from what was still a *gavur* place. By ca. 1523 the Muslim element had shrunk to 14% and the Christian grown to 86%; Trebizond was in real danger of becoming totally Christian again. There was a second deportation, which stuck. By 1553 the Muslim:Christian ratio was 47:53% and by 1583 it had turned tables to 54:46%. The critical point seems to be when a Christian element has shrunk to about 55%. It may be that Christian parishes (*mahalles*) paid a fixed *ispence* regardless of numbers, so fewer paid more; at all events about 55% seems a point of no return, after which whole parishes convert in landslides. What is more certain is that by 1583 a total of 43% of the Muslims were identified as being first or second generation converts: here at least we know what happened to many Byzantines. But Orthodox converts to Islam do not become Turks overnight. Christian or Muslim, the place must have remained predominantly Pontic Greek-speaking.

In the towns, where new converts tended to "try harder" and found mosques, social conversion may have been delayed after religious conversion only by a generation or two. But in the country it takes longer. Among Pontic Tonyalis and Oflus social conversion has still fully to catch up: in local parlance some of these undoubted and zealous Muslims speak "Christian" — i.e. Pontic Greek²⁷. I venture that in other cases, like the vexatious "Muslim" - speaking Karamanlidi Christians, social conversion came before religious. In the Pontos conversion was clearly swifter in the city (where the ecclesiastical establishment lost its economic base) than in the hinterland, especially where the three great monasteries of the interior kept their lands. But I do not think that the delay

26. Lowry, *Trabzon*, 209-47.

27. H. Umur, *Of Tarihi*, Istanbul 1951; Bryer, *CS*, XI, 45-6; A. Bryer and D. Winfield, *The Byzantine monuments and topography of the Pontos*, Washington, D. C. 1983 (forthcoming), sections xxviii and xxv.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

between religious and social conversion accounts for the crypto-Christians who emerged in 1857 and are listed in document 1.

Document 1 and (so far as the British Foreign Office was concerned) its sequel a decade later in document 9, should be read in the context of the extraordinary concern for Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire felt in a network of largely Liberal British diplomatic, governmental, missionary, literary and archaeological circles in the years before and after the Crimean War: the phase did not really end until the crises of 1876 which brought Abdul Hamit II to the throne and a deterioration of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Such circles were remarkably well informed through a group of often eminent and sometimes wayward Victorians, a few of whom also entered Ottoman service. For example, when the crypto-Christians emerged in 1856-57 the Foreign Office enjoyed the services of (Sir) James Redhouse as its Oriental Translator. As an orphaned cabin-boy on a Turkish ship he had once embraced Islam and then entered Ottoman naval and diplomatic service; he is better known for his dictionary. The Levant Service of the British consular service tended to be manned by the "Levantine" commercial families, such as the Stevens; they traded in both the Crimea and Trebizond and are responsible for documents 1-8. But there was an attempt to replace such local merchants in the 1860s by consuls like (Sir) Richard Burton, who was posted to Damascus in 1869. In this spirit, the British Foreign Office's answer to Napoleon III's Jesuit agent, Sohail, was William Gifford Palgrave (1826-88), who reported on the Kurumlis as H.B.M.'s Consul at Trebizond in 1867 (document 9) and submitted a massive parliamentary report on the province the following year²⁸.

Palgrave's London connections were impeccable. He was on dining terms with Gladstone, Browning and Tennyson; his father had founded the Public Record Office, where his consular despatches are now filed. By 1865 his brothers had achieved some distinction: (Professor) Francis Palgrave (1824-97) with his *Golden Treasury*; (Sir) Robert Palgrave (1827-1919) as an economist; and (Sir) Reginald Palgrave (1829-1904) as clerk to the House of Commons. In that year William Gifford Pal-

28. C. L. Smith, *The embassy of Sir William White at Constantinople, 1886-1891*, Oxford 1957, 1; D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service. British Consuls since 1825*, London 1971, 52, 127, 144-5, 157, 163. W. G. Palgrave, *Report on the Province of Trebizond* of January 1868 in PRO FO 195.812 contributed to his «Report on the Provinces of Trebizond, Sivas, Kastemouni, and part of Angora», in Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Accounts and Papers*, 59 (1868-69), 335-400.

grave was on the point of taking up the Prussian consulship at Mosul when the Abyssinian crisis blew up. The Foreign Office accepted Palgrave's offer to rescue the British hostages of Emperor Theodore (1855-68) by sailing up the Nile in a new uniform, escorted by four Nubian slaves. The then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was (Sir) Henry Layard (1817-94), who seems, however, to have put more faith in negotiations between the Ethiopian Negus and another British agent a Nestorian Christian called Hormuzd Rassam. But Theodore made Rassam hostage too, and Palgrave's mission was called off. The matter did not end until 1868, at the cost of £8 million sterling and some thousands of lives, including Theodore's suicide at Magdala²⁹.

In July 1866 Palgrave was posted first to the British consulate at Sukhum Kale, in Russian Abkhazia, and soon after to Trebizond. But in the same month Layard left his desk at the Foreign Office with the change of government, and so would not have seen Palgrave's confidential despatches, particularly that of 17 April 1867. This could have been unfortunate for the Kurumlis of Trebizond, for Layard was perhaps uniquely qualified to assess the value of Palgrave's opinion of them. He not only had first-hand knowledge of Kurum itself, but had a particular knowledge of, and concern for, the consequences of the *Tanzimat* among Christian and other non-Muslim Ottoman minorities. Layard had excavated Nineveh from 1845, and the party which he led from Trebizond to Mosul on his second expedition there in 1849 included, besides Muslims and Anglicans, a Catholic Syrian, a (Gregorian?) Armenian, a Yezidi divine, and none other than Hormuzd Rassam. As Layard describes, this heterodox caravan chose the direct summer road south of Trebizond, which ran straight through crypto-Christian territory. He must have ridden up Matzouka, through the Pontic Gates, and down to Kurum itself. It must be admitted that the crypto-Christians of Trebizond were a very minor issue to lie upon the desk of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1867, but one wonders if the fate of the Kurumlis would have been different if Layard had still sat at the desk then³⁰.

Palgrave, like previous consuls, saw the Russian consul-general's machinations behind Kurumli unrest. Since the Russian invasion of 1829, which had reached Kurum itself, some thousands (some estimate 90.000)

29. Allen, *Palgrave*, 205-20; G. Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh*, London 1963, 301-6.

30. A. H. Layard, *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon; with travels in Armenia, Kurdistan and the Desert: being the result of a second expedition*, London 1853, 1-8; Waterfield, *Layard*, 198, 307.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

of Kurumlis had emigrated to the Russian Caucasus. Now, by declaring themselves Christian, Kurumlis could not only evade military service, but seek Russian protection to avoid any other kind of obligation to the Ottoman state. There is no question that the Kurumlis were small pawns in the "Great Game" played out between the Western, Russian and Ottoman Empires and document 9 is but one of numerous unpublished replies to a circular questionnaire sent by the French, Russian and British governments to their consuls on the status of Christians in the Ottoman Empire in 1867. But Palgrave's opinions carried weight, and by his standards document 9 is moderately worded. It is in his published works and unpublished letters, which complement his despatches, that Palgrave adds another factor to his understandable diplomatic irritation with the Kurumlis and Pontic Greeks in general, which needs explanation. In England he had a reputation for being contentious, opinionated and (it can be shown) sometimes recklessly inaccurate. He was scornful of the Byzantine architecture of Trebizond, repelled by the pilgrimage to Soumela, regretted the passing of the Derebeys, a sort of Turkish equivalent to the natural English gentleman and squire, and extolled Islam as a "natural religion"³¹. Such opinions were common enough in

31. An example of Palgrave's view of the architecture of Trebizond: «...the dwarfish littleness and tasteless ornamentation of the over-vaunted church of St. Sophia; the still feebler proportions of the churches of St. Eugenius, St. John, and others... and their defects are rendered but more glaring by a servile attempt to copy the great though ungraceful models of earlier Byzantine dates: «The Monastery of Soumela», *Fraser's Magazine*, 3 (1871), 195 = *Eclectic Magazine*, 77 (New York), 481 = *Ulysses, or Scenes and Studies in many Lands*, London 1887, 2. An example of his contentiousness comes in the debate which ensued after his paper on «A tour in north-eastern Anatolia», *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 16 (1872), 222-4. In it, *The Field* for 20 March 1872, p. 288, reported that "Major Frederick Millingen", author of *Wild Life among the Koords*, London 1870, «complained that he had not been mentioned among the authors who had written of the table land of Asia Minor. He said that he had met many brigands even between Erzroum and Trebizonde. One brigand he ordered 400 lashes. Mr Palgrave said that if a man looked out for any special company, he could always find it». "Millingen" reiterated his complaint in a letter to *The Field* for 6 April 1872, p. 317, that Palgrave thought that «my labours were not worth the paper they were written in». Of course, in "Millingen", Palgrave may have met his match — or at least what may have seemed an unnerving mirror image of himself. "Frederick" was son of the mishellene Dr. J. M. Millingen (1800-78), first Byron's doctor and surgeon to the Greek army, who in 1825 turned Turk and became personal physician to five successive Sultans. "Frederick Millingen's" mother, baptised Roman Catholic, died in a *harem*. "Frederick" was in fact Osman Bey in the Ottoman army. A pioneer of modern obscene antisemitic literature, Osman eventually turned Greek under Russian protection, taking the

Palgrave's circle. But one vehemently-expressed opinion makes startling reading in the context of English Liberal views of the time. Palgrave was a mishellene. He despised all sorts of Greeks on racial grounds, and regarded the Kurumlis as apostates beneath contempt. They followed «the trail of the serpent»; such people were «simply the most disagreeable, quarrelsome, bigoted, narrow - minded set I have ever had to deal with». Curiously, he claimed great racial antiquity for the Kurumlis — as descendants of Xenophon's Ten Thousand, an opinion that he repeated in his parliamentary report³². But that did nothing to help their cause, for as he remarked of the Ten Thousand in a private letter of 16 February 1868, «The Greeks, plundering brigands that they were by their own avowal, I don't wonder that the "natives" objected to their visit. Had they behaved like gentlemen, matters would doubtless have gone very differently»³³. At the time when Palgrave wrote document 9 and was preparing his parliamentary report, he reserved his most intimate letters for Clara Jekyll, the future Lady Henley. They are characteristically forthright — for example, on 24 October 1867, on American Protestant missionaries: «...you remarked what good sort of people they were: only you said it was a pity to see just such good people engaged in so unsatisfactory a work as that of trying to make people dissatisfied with the religion they were born and bred in»³⁴. The discussion of conversion seems to have begun when on 18 June 1867 Palgrave had written to Clara Jekyll that «There is an Eastern proverb: "He who changes his religion has none at all"»³⁵.

name of Alexis Andrejevitch. Besides T.B.S., s.n. J. M. Millingen in the *D.N.B.*, see «*For Freedom's battle*», *Byron's Letters and Journals*, XI, ed. L. A. Marchand, London 1981, 216-7; W. St. Clair, *That Greece might still be free*, London 1972, 350. Some of Palgrave's Arabian reports were questioned as recently as 1947 by H. St. J. Philby (1885-1960) (himself father of one of the more spectacular of modern apostates): Allen, *Palgrave*, 206-9. Whatever the truth of Philby's strictures, Palgrave was a demonstrably careless witness: for a small example he variously described the walls of Rhizaion (Rize) as being not «much under two miles in extent» (a gross overestimate), as being «of Laz constructions», and then specified their date as «eighth or ninth century» by comparison with the (largely Ottoman) Yedikule: Palgrave, *Ulysses*, 16; *Report*, 357.

32. Palgrave, *Report*, 356, 363, 367, 374-6, 384-6; references in. n. 31.

33. Unpublished letter from Trebizond, to his brother (Sir) Robert Inglis Palgrave, among the Henley Papers, DR 475 DS 43.1.P3, St. Antony's College, Oxford.

34. From Samsun (Amisos). I am grateful to the Librarian of St. Antony's College for access to the Palgrave-Jekyll Letters, in which Palgrave's subscriptions have been excised; cf. Allen, *Palgrave*, 228.

35. From Therapia (Tarabya), near Constantinople. He concluded: «No great credit

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

This last opinion was, as Palgrave recognised, a contradictory one: it certainly tells us something about him, and may well be a clue to his attitude to the crypto-Christians of Trebizond. In 1866-67, when Palgrave was corresponding with Clara Jekyll, Palgrave was a professed Anglican, the faith he had held when he obtained his First in Greats at Trinity College, Oxford. But it was the Oxford of John Henry Newman and the Tractarians. William Gifford Palgrave had himself converted: to Roman Catholicism. For he was none other than Père Sohail, Napoleon III's Jesuit agent in Syria, *alias* Selim abu Mahmud el Eys. The decision of Palgrave (or Sohail) of Arabia to join the British foreign service may have been precipitated by a move by his Jesuit provincial to post him to the Kentucky mission in 1865, but Palgrave never gave very clear reasons for his conversions — and he converted up to six times during his life.

Whatever the explanation for Palgrave's attitude to the open and secret Christians of Trebizond and whether it affected Foreign Office views of them, the British never pursued their cause in the same way that they had the Albanian crypto-Christians of Guilan. By 1869 Trebizond and Russian seduction of Kurumlis and Greeks there ceased to have what tiny importance they had as part of the Tsarist threat to British overland communications with India, for the Suez Canal was opened. Palgrave was posted elsewhere in 1873 and was never replaced by a consul of his consequence. Trebizond fell into a backwater. Such wider considerations did not help the Kurumlis, however, for whom the recognition of 12-30,000 of them as Christian was now delayed until 1910, two years after the last Ottoman constitution, and came about through Russian and French, rather than British, diplomatic pressure³⁶. By 1910 the attractions of becoming a Christian subject were less obvious, for Christians now had military obligations, and there seemed every hope of the Russians taking Trebizond, which was fulfilled five years later.

Either Palgrave perpetrated a gross injustice upon the then crypto

to me in person certainly: but as I have changed mine to come to that I was born and bred in, I may, I hope, be excused.

36. The consequences of the Young Turk revolution of 1908 were slow to be felt in the Pontos. The *pali* of Trebizond asked for a ruling on the status of the crypto-Christians on 24 February 1909, but delayed conveying an assurance that all Kurumlis could declare their faith, to Metropolitan Constantine II of Trebizond, until 29 December 1910: see Janin, *Echos d'Orient*, 15 (1912), 503-5; F. W. Hasluck, 'The crypto-Christians of Trebizond', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 41 (1921), 199-202.

-Christians of Trebizond, or they had met their match in a man who had himself been a crypto-Christian. Beyond the Russian exploitation of the Kurumlis, Palgrave noted three things about them. They carried arms, like Muslims. They did not perform military service, like Christians. But unlike Christians, they did not pay a poll tax in lieu of military service. After 1856 they continued to claim all three privileges. In other words they understandably wanted to keep not so much the best of both worlds, Israel and Rimmon, but to reject both — a desire which Palgrave, of all people, would have appreciated. But Palgrave had in his consular files document 1, the Kurumlis' own figures for 1857, distributed in the map on p. 68, which might have aroused his suspicions. First, of all the crypto-Christian areas, it was only in Chieriana (Şiran) (12) that Muslims outnumbered open and secret Christians combined in 1857. Indeed, in the villages of Kurum(1), Stavri (2) and Santa (4) there were virtually no Muslims from whom Christianity could be hid. In Kurum itself Dawkins records that the first resident Turkish officials only arrived in 1914, just before the Russians³⁷. In these circumstances it is difficult to account for the need to dissimulate one's faith. Yet there is no doubt that this was done.

Second, Palgrave might have enquired further into the origins of the crypto-Christians, for far from being the descendants of stragglers from the Ten Thousand, they may only have found themselves thus within living memory.

It may be that the earliest evidence for secret Christianity in Kurum

37. The accuracy of the Kurumli figures, expressed in the map on p. 68, is difficult to assess. First, they do not always relate to Ottoman boundaries. Second, they do not attempt — as has here been done for (15) Trebizond itself — to cover entire populations. So the pie-charts on p. 68 represent no more than proportions of allegiances in those villages, *only*, in which crypto-Christians lived. Stevens agreed with the compilers of the 1857 petition that crypto-Christian numbers were probably underrated. If this is so, open Christians are likely to be underestimated the more, and Muslim figures should be underrated even more severely — and wholly Muslim-villages omitted entirely. An extreme case is (14) Bulancak, which supposedly had no Muslims in 1857, but obviously included a number in 1859 (Document 8). Areas (10)-(13) are only pockets of Kurumli and Greek Orthodox settlement in a largely Muslim and occasionally Armenian sea. Nevertheless the figures for the "new" settlements (1)-(5) in the crypto-Christian heartland are probably near the actual global figures, Muslim included, for almost every village seems to be included. This leaves us with an intermediate area of "old" settlement in (7)-(9) on the map, comprising the exarchates of the monasteries of Vazelon, Peristereota and Soumela (excluding Santa), or the Ottoman *nahiye* of Matzouka (Maçka, Cevizlik, Karydia). Here other

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

lies in an archontic house, dated 1825, recorded by Dawkins, which was built to accommodate both faiths. But the earliest clear reference to them seems to be by Smith and Dwight, two American divines, who passed through in 1833³⁸. Matzouka, Stavri and Kurum lie on the summer road from Trebizond and crypto-Christianity naturally excited the interest of the numerous Western travellers and missionaries who crossed the Pontic Alps into Armenia. Hamilton noticed them in 1836 and Flandin and Coste in 1840³⁹. Some travellers did not remark on them, such as Ainsworth in 1840, Wagner in 1844, and Layard in 1849, so it is dangerous to argue from silence before 1833⁴⁰. Yet none of the 25 or so travellers who took the summer road between 1796 and 1833 mention the crypto-Christians. It is therefore a working hypothesis that they adopted a secrecy of faith around the period of the Russian capture and brief occupation of Argyropolis (Gümüshane) in Chaldia (5) in 1829. True, the flight of Christian families with Paskevitch's army when it left, to set up Pontic villages in the Caucasus, established the Kurumli-Russian attachment then. But the clue to their origins may be better found in an

estimates of approximately the same boundaries, give an idea of the relative accuracy of both the Kurumli figures of 1857 and Palgrave's of 1868:

Date	Choria	Open & Crypto- Christians	Muslims	Total	Source
1520	57	12,080	1,665	13,745	Ottoman <i>defter</i> (Gökbilgin).
1857	10	11,160	1,450	12,610	Kurumli, Document 1
1868	98	12,066	18,460	30,526	Palgrave, Report, 356.
1912	..	12,437	4,283	17,720	Ottoman (Maccas).
1920	70	16,525	5,335	21,860	Greek (Zerzelides).

For the ca. 1520 figures (which will be revised by Lowry), and ca. 1920 estimates, see Bryer, *CS*, V, 121; the 1912 census is in L. Maccas, *L'Hellénisme de l'Asie Mineure*, Paris 1919, 82. Comparison suggests that while the Kurumlis probably underestimated the Muslim element in Matzouka, Palgrave wildly overestimated it.

38. Dawkins, *Byzantion*, 8 (1933), 267; E. Smith, *Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and the Rev. H.G.O. Dwight in Armenia*, II, Boston 1833, 319-20.

39. W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, I, London 1842, 340; E. Flandin and P. Coste, *Voyage en Perse*, I, Paris 1851, 38, whose "meso-meso" are taken by, e.g., Meliores, *Kryptochristianoï*, 20, as the earliest reference to the Kurumlis.

40. W. F. Ainsworth, *Travels and researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, I, London 1842, 396-7 (on Stavri); M. Wagner, *Travels in Persia, Georgia and Koordistan*, II, London 1856, 286-95; Layard, *Discoveries*, 1-8.

unrelated event of the same period. By 1829 the famous declining silver mines of Argyropolis were in their last gasp, and were closed soon after. It is a moot question whether the ore was exhausted before the fuel needed to smelt it. But the result left thousands of Greeks in an administrative limbo.

The mines are first recorded as an Ottoman mint in the sixteenth century, but were not revived on a large scale until the second half of the seventeenth century, by Greek concessionary *archimetallourgoi*. Under the concession Greek miners and charcoal-burners (the inevitable concomitant to Chaldian mining) were excused *harac* in return for mining or charcoal service⁴¹. New Greek settlements sprung up south of the Pontic Alps in the highland valleys of Torul (6), Zigana (3), Stavri (2), Kurum (1) and Santa (4) especially — areas which were to become the crypto-Christian heartland. There is little or no archaeological evidence for any of these impressive settlements before the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries⁴². After the mines closed by stages there were several options open to those Greeks who, by not paying *harac* or any other service, were now neither officially Christian or Muslim. Some went to Russia. Others went to new mines at Ak Dağ in 1832, and to the alum mines north of Koloneia (Şebinkarahisar) — marked Tzanchraki (13) on the map — significantly taking their special status with them. I had been puzzled by the presence of crypto-Christians on the north side of the Pontic Alps, in the Matzouka (7), Soumela (8) and Galiana (9) valleys, for the Christian majorities of these districts was dominated by the three great landowning medieval monasteries already mentioned. Surely if one's landlord is an abbot one does not profess secret Christianity? But, as Dr Jennings will show from Ottoman judicial records for Matzouka, Greeks there owed (char) coal service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too. So I propose that the bulk of the crypto-Christians of the Pontos owe their origin to their special status in relation to a

41. A. Bryer, 'The question of the Byzantine mines in the Pontos: Chalybian iron, Chaldian silver, Koloneian alum and the mummy of Cheriana', *Anatolian Studies*, 33 (1983), 133-50. Bryer and Winfield, 'Αρχαίων Πόντου', 30 (1970), 327.

42. Selina Ballance, A. Bryer, Jane Isaac and D. Winfield, 'Nineteenth-century Monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes, Part 1, 'Αρχαίων Πόντου', 28 (1966), 268-305 (Kurum, Stavri, Yağlı Dere, İmera); Part 2, 'Αρχαίων Πόντου', 29 (1968), 108-29 (Santa); Part 3, 'Αρχαίων Πόντου', 30 (1970), 307-50 (Stavri, Yağlı Dere, Kurum, Leri, Gümüşhane); Part 4, 'Αρχαίων Πόντου', 32 (1972-73), 142-268 (Stavri, Torul, Chaldia, Şiran, Şebinkarahisar); Bryer and Winfield, *Monuments*, sections xix, xx-xxii.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Chaldian mining economy⁴³. The map on p. 68 therefore shows the distribution of those inheriting the status a generation or more after the mines had failed. No wonder the Kurumlis wished to retain not the best of both worlds, but obligation to neither, and no wonder that they looked not to the Church (which was slower than the Ottoman state in recognising them with a diocese of Rhodopolis), but to the Great Powers to preserve their peculiar, and quite accidental, position. It was not the *mul-lahs* or Muslims which they wished to avoid, as Ottoman registry officials. In the process, they certainly became crypto-Christians about 1829, in a limbo where spiritual deprivation was real enough, but for good economic and social reasons. So many chose to cling to their anomalous status well after 1857.

It is no disrespect to the undoubted sufferings of the crypto-Christians of the Pontos to suggest that they are not the long-enduring martyrs to the faith that Dawkins had in mind, or that their attitude to conversion, or half-conversion, was as governed by social and economic factors as much as were most Christians within an Islamic state. Yet crypto-Christians who were so for reasons of faith rather than convenience can be found: in Japan, where they emerged at about the same time as the Kurumlis, but had a much older history. Here, in some southern villages of Nagasaki and Urakami, five-family groups appear to have secretly handed down the faith without benefit of the banished Jesuit priests, from the 1630s until their "rediscovery" in 1865⁴⁴. European Catholics

43. R. Jennings, «Maçuka in the Ottoman judicial registers of Trabzon», in *Continuity and Change*, edd. Bryer and Lowry (see n. 14). The proof that the term «Kurumli» in fact meant a miner from Chaldia with an anomalous status comes from the fact that crypto-Christians grievances after 1857 came largely from mining communities which had been colonised by Kurumlis after the Gümtüşane mines had failed around 1829: in Ak Dağ, Ala Dağ, Sin Maden, Bulgur Maden and Bulgur Dağ, in the vilayets of Konya, Angora (Ankara) and Sivas. The Archbishops of Chaldia, often of the Phytianos family which also provided the *archimetallourgoi* of Argyropolis, also extended their exarchate to «All Metal-Bearing Lands», including the alum mines around Transhraki (13). This probably "new" Greek settlement on the coast lies close to the ancient Greek centre and extinct diocese of Kerasous (Giresun), which does not figure at all in the petition of 1857. It would appear that a number of Chaldian miner-Kurumlis had settled the place, justifying the extraordinary claim of the Chaldian diocese for a "corridor" to the sea between the eparchies of Neokaisareia (at Ordu) and of Trebizond at Bulancak, just before the First World War: see the map in the Union Micrasiatique de Smyrne, *Étude sur l'Avenir économique de l'Asie Mineure*, Paris 1919.

44. C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, London 1967; cf. S. Endo's novel *Silence*.

pronounced them Christian, though they were themselves sometimes less enthusiastic about their new-found co-religionists. For the sake of symmetry it would be nice to introduce Palgrave to the crypto-Christians of Nagasaki. But by the time he reached Japan in 1881, he had already contracted Siamese Buddhism and was soon deep into Shintoism. However it was in the arms of the Roman Catholic Church that he died in Montevideo in 1888. William Gifford Palgrave may, as Père Michel Sohail, once a Jesuit priest, *alias* Selim abu Mahmud el Eys, have found an identity at last. But he has the last word, or rather name, which he sometimes used: Michael Cohen, "the priest". For his father, Sir Francis Palgrave, was Ephraim Cohen until his marriage⁴⁵. The identity and religion of William Gifford Palgrave was in fact far more complex than that of any of the crypto-Christians of the Pontos on which he reported in the Appendix that follows.

45. Allen, *Palgrave*, 288-94.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 1

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, October 31st 1857.

No. 46/1857

sent home.

[To Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe
H.B.M.'s Ambassador, Constantinople]¹*My Lord.*

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's Despatch of 16th instant and its enclosures, and to state, that the information which has reached your Lordship regarding the desire of the Kooroomlees to make an open profession of christianity, is perfectly correct.

Some months ago, several of the parties interested, called on me, and asked my advice, as to the course they should pursue for attaining their object and I recommended them to write a petition to your Lordship, which they could either give me to forward or send to Constantinople by one of their own people; they preferred the latter and deputed a certain Mustafa Yasigee, son of Toorsoon, to represent them at the capital and furnished him with four copies of the petition, the one addressed to your Excellency and the other three, to the Austrian, French and Russian Representatives: aware of this, and of the departure from Trebizond of Mustafa Yasigee, I thought it superfluous to report the matter to your Lordship and I preferred watching for the moment, the feelings of the Mahomedan population in connection with the question at issue: This My Lord, I am happy to say, is favourable to the Kooroomlees, if one may judge from the extreme indifference with which all Mahomedans talk of the intended change: — from time immemorial a suspicion has been attached to the inhabitants of the district of Kooroom, that they are neither Mussulmans nor Christians, and when in July last, the report was spread in Trebizond, that they were about to abjure Mohomedanism, the Pasha, Defterdar and many others of the leading Mussulmans, remarked, that it was not a subject of congratulation to the Christians, as the Kooroomlees, never believed in anything and were like animals on the subject of religion. The Mahomedans are moreover aware, that circumcision is scarcely known among them, that they have churches of their own and that it is only when they happen to be living entirely among Mahomedans that they attend Mosques and Mussulman meetings. There are instances of Kooroomlees having married Mahomedan girls and of having obliged them to renounce their faith, but excepting in one or two cases, no notice

1. Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, (1786-1880), «The Great Elgi» to the Sublime Porte, 1810-12, 1825-29, 1831, 1841-46, 1848-51, 1853-58.

seems to have been taken of these convictions. The evidence of a witness, if he is known to be a Kooroomlee, is of little validity before the Mejlis.

It would be impossible to state the number of families likely to come forward and make openly a profession of Christianity, if properly supported, the enclosed list is a translation of one made by the Kooroomlees; I am inclined to think it underrated, and the compilers themselves admit that it is so. According to some accounts every village in this Pashalick contains one or more families of these people and I am assured by persons likely to be well — informed on the subject, that there are many in Trebizond, who though descendants of Mohamedans and born of Mohamedan parents, profess secretly the Christian creed.

In conclusion, I beg to remark, that if some means are not devised by the Turkish Government for satisfying the wishes of the Kooroomlees, many of them are likely to emigrate to Russia; during the last month or two, several of them have become Russian subjects and the present Russian Consul here, is by no means circumspect in procuring passports for all these showing the slightest inclination to possess them.

I have the honour to be & c.

*(Signed) Geo: Alex Stevens²
Acting Consul.*

² G. A. Stevens, Acting Consul at Trebizond (1841-58), succeeded Vice Consul H. Suter (1837-41).

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

(Translation)

List of Villages and their dependencies showing the Kooromlee, Greek and Turkish inhabitants in the Territory so called Trebizond.—

Name of Village and its dependencies	No. of Houses in Village	of which are Mussulman	of which are Kooromlees	of which are Greeks
Cromi or Koorom ³ Dependencies				
Mohora ⁴	100	none	100	none

3. Κρώμνη; Kromni, Kurum. The identifications which follow are taken principally from: The cryptochristian petition of 15 July 1857 in Chrysanthos, *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου*, 4-5 (1933), 718, where eighteen of the 59 villages listed here are noted and one (Κοβάσι) [Koás], Geçi Kale in Chaldia is noted but not listed here); the map attached to H. Kiepert, «Die Verbreitung der griechischen Sprache im Pontischen Küstengebirge», *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 25 (1890), 317-30; G. Kandilaptes, *Γεωγραφικὸν καὶ ἱστορικὸν λεξικὸν τῆς ἐπαρχίας Χαλδίας*, serialised alphabetically up to «Mouskenanton» in *Ποντιακὰ φύλλα*, 1(1936)-2(1937); and *Χρονικὰ τοῦ Πόντου*, 2(1945)-3(1946); Selina Ballance, Anthony Bryer, Jane Isaac and David Winfield, «Nineteenth-century monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes», serialised in *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου*, 28 (1966), 233-308; 29 (1968), 89-132; 30 (1970), 228-385; 32 (1972-73), 126-310; and 33 (1976), 25-27; the British Army 1:500,000 map of 1901; the Turkish 1:200,000 map of the 1940s and 1950s; the *Trabzon il Yillığı* of 1967 and 1973; the *Gümüşhane il Yillığı* of 1967; and the *Giresun il Yillığı* of 1967. In the map on p. 68 below, which illustrates the figures in this despatch, areas have been grouped thus: 1) Kurum (notes 3-12 below); 2) Yağlıdere (13-18); 3) Stavri, with Zigana (19-25); 4) Santa (26-34); 5) Chaldia - i.e. the Harşit-Kanis valley around Gümüşhane - (35-38, 40-42); 6) Torul—in fact its south-western hinterland—(39); (Matzouka valley—i.e. the eparchy of Vazelon—(43-45, 47, 50-51); 8) the eparchy of, Soumela (46, 48); 9) Galiana valley—i.e. the eparchy of Peristereota—(49, 52) 10) Leri valley (53-56); 11) the Kelkit headwaters (57); 12) Cheriana (58); 13) Tzanchraki (59); and 14) Bulancak and west of Giresun (60-61). The estimate for 15) Trebizond city, is taken from Bryer and Winfield, *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου*, 30 (1970), 252, Fig. 16 and note, using an aggregate breakdown of consular and other estimates throughout the nineteenth century. In the note I was at pains to explain how useless my statistics for the relative proportions of the communities in the city were, but it turns out that they are no more misleading than those of the Ottoman census of 1893, which were published subsequently See K. Karpat, «Ottoman population records and the census of 1881/82-1893», *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1978), 268.

	Bryer estimate	1893 census
Greek	23.5%	23.4%
Muslim	65.3%	67.3%
Armenian	6.3%	8.1%
Others	4.9%	1.2%

4. Μοχώρα, in Kurum.

Name of Village and its dependencies		No. of Houses in Village	of which are Mussulman	of which are Kooroomlees	of which are Greeks
_____	<i>Alithinos</i> ⁵	80	none	50	50
_____	<i>Alhajandon</i> ⁶	200	"	50	150
_____	<i>Carnalandon</i> ⁷	100	"	40	60
_____	<i>Samanandon</i> ⁸	200	"	none	200
_____	<i>Rustamandon</i> ⁹	100	"	40	60
_____	<i>Gluvena</i> ¹⁰	110	"	70	40
_____	<i>Zahmatandon</i> ¹¹	40	none	none	40
_____	<i>Serandon and Ymera</i> ¹²	150	2	10	138
Parti ¹³ (no dependencies)		100	none	10	90
Yagli Derreh ¹⁴					
Dependencies					
_____	<i>Varenu</i> ¹⁵	130	none	40	90
_____	<i>Nacarandon</i> ¹⁶	50	none	50	none
_____	<i>Russion</i> ¹⁷	80	"	60	20
_____	<i>Cercilandon</i> ¹⁸	70	"	60	10
Stilos (no dependencies) ¹⁹		20	6	14	none
Ziganitandon (do) ²⁰		40	none	30	10
Stavri ²¹					
Dependencies					
_____	<i>Epanohori</i> ²²	70	10	60	none
_____	<i>Monovandon</i> ²³	100	none	20	80

5. Ἀληθινός; Alethino, in Kurum.

6. Ἀλχατζάντων, in Kurum.

7. Unidentified, presumed in Kurum.

8. Σαμανάντων; Samananda, in Kurum.

9. Ρουσταμάντων, in Kurum.

10. Γλούβενα, in Kurum.

11. Τσαχμανάντων, in Kurum.

12. Σαράντων; Ίμερα, Γήμερα, Imera, in Kurum.

13. Παρτί, Πάρτη; Pardi, Parti, Partin, Partimahalle, by Yağhdere.

14. Γιαγλίτερέ; Yağlidere, between Stavri and Imera.

15. Βαρενοῦ, Βαρενόν; Varellimahalle, on Yağhdere.

16. Νατζαράντων, on Yağhdere.

17. Ρουσίον, on Yağhdere.

18. Τσερχελάντων, on Yağhdere.

19. Στόλος; unidentified, presumed between Yağhdere and Zigana.

20. Ζυγανίτα, Zigana.

21. Σταύρη, Σταυρίν; Istavri, Uğurtaş.

22. Ἐπανωχώριν, Upper Stavri.

23. Μονοβάντων, in Stavri.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Name of Village and its dependencies	No. of Houses in Village	of which are Mussulman	of which are Kooroomlees	of which are Greeks
_____ Bairamandon ²⁴	6	none	6	none
_____ Catohori ²⁵	120	*	40	80
Santa ²⁶				
Dependencies				
_____ Pistofando ²⁷	170	none	20	150
_____ Zurnaciandon ²⁸	70	*	70	none
_____ Cincalandon ²⁹	25	*	20	5
_____ Sihanandon ³⁰	150	*	20	130
_____ Cejlarandon ³¹	40	*	40	none
_____ Pinetendon ³²	30	*	15	15
_____ Terjendon ³³	80	*	50	30
_____ Kelendon ³⁴	50	*	50	none
Chacaza ³⁵	40	none	25	15
Zefli ³⁶	30	*	15	15
Karsera ³⁷	300	100	120	80
Gumush Khana ³⁸	1500	800	300	400
Torul ³⁹	2300	200	450	1650
Harava ⁴⁰	150	20	40	90
Muzena ⁴¹	500	none	100	400
Size and Pagmen ⁴²	100	*	60	40

24. Πατραμάντων, in Stavri.
 25. Κατωχώρι, Lower Stavri.
 26. Σάντα; Santa, Dumanlı.
 27. Πιστοφάντων; Pištofli, in Santa.
 28. Ζουρνατσάντων; Zurnaçih, in Santa.
 29. Τσακαλάντων; Çakale, in Santa.
 30. Ίσχανάντων; İshanlı, in Santa.
 31. Κοζλαράντων; Çincalı, in Santa.
 32. Πινατάντων; Binaltı, in Santa.
 33. Τερζάντων; Terzili, in Santa.
 34. Κοπαλάντων; Goballı, in Santa.
 35. Τζάνιχα, Ζάγκα, Τσάγκα; Canca, in Chaldia.
 36. Unidentified, presumed in Chaldia.
 37. Χάρσερα; Haşera, in Chaldia.
 38. (Ἐργυρόπολις); (Eski) Gümüşhane, in Chaldia.
 39. Ἀρσάσα, Τορούλ; Ardasa, Torul.
 40. Χάραβα; Haravi, in Chaldia.
 41. Μούζαινα; Muzana, in Chaldia.
 42. Σήσε, Παζπέν; Basbind, Pazpen, in Chaldia.

<i>Name of Village and its dependencies</i>	<i>No. of Houses in Village</i>	<i>of which are Mussulman</i>	<i>of which are Kooroomlees</i>	<i>of which are Greeks</i>
Hapsi Kioi ⁴³	80	none	60	20
Pondica ⁴⁴	450	20	200	230
Thersa ⁴⁵	60	none	57	3
Larahani ⁴⁶	100	20	40	40
Aursa ⁴⁷	60	none	30	30
Davera ⁴⁸	200	"	10	190
Galiana ⁴⁹	600	110	140	350
Capi Zerfire ⁵⁰	300	10	150	140
Hazzavera ⁵¹	40	30	10	none
Samaruksa and Kilad ⁵²	400	100	100	200
Cavara ⁵³	30	20	10	none
Tanturlu ⁵⁴	60	4	40	16
Leri ⁵⁵	200	none	100	100
Nama ⁵⁶	20	5	10	5
Kelehafir and Cilimpirtak ⁵⁷	150	50	30	70
Seriana ⁵⁸	500	300	100	100
Ciagrak ⁵⁹	250	100	50	100

43. Χαψᾶ, Χαψίχοι(ν); Hamsiköy, Upper Matzouka (Maçka), (in Vazelon exarchate).
44. Πόντιλα; Bondila, in Matzouka.
45. Αἰθέρισα, Θέρσις; Thersa, Sera, Sersa, in Matzouka.
46. Λαροχανή; Larhan, Akarsu, in Soumela exarchate.
47. Ἀγούρσα; Ağursa, Bakimli, in Matzouka.
48. Δουβερά, Λιβερά; Douvera, Livera, Yazlık, exarchate of Soumela, from 1902 seat of the diocese of Rhodopolis.
49. Γαλιανα, Galiana, Kalyandere, the exarchate of Peristereota 1501-1863, when passed to Rhodopolis.
50. Ζούζα, Ζερφυρί; Zouza, Kapiköy, Zerfiri, in Matzouka.
51. Χατζάβερα; Hatzavera, Hocavera, in Matzouka.
52. Σαμάρουξα, Κολάδι; Büyük and Küçük Samarouksa, Kilat, in Galiana.
53. Κάβαρα; unidentified, presumed between Galiana and Leri.
54. Ταντουρλου; unidentified, presumed between Galiana and Leri.
55. Λερί(ν); Leri, Lori.
56. Unidentified, presumed near Leri.
57. Kelahbur, Gelinpertek, on Upper Kelkit.
58. Χερσιάν; Siran, on the Kelkit.
59. Tzanchraki, Çakrak, 50 km. south of Tripolis (Tirebolu) and of Kerasous (Giresun) on the river of that name.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

<i>Name of Village and its dependencies</i>	<i>No. of Houses in Village</i>	<i>of which are Mussulman</i>	<i>of which are Kooroomlees</i>	<i>of which are Greeks</i>
Bulanjiak ⁶⁰	50	none	20	30
Agelayi ⁶¹	200	,	150	50
Total	11,151 Houses	1,907 Mussulman	3,452 Kooroomlees	5,792 Greeks
<i>Mahomedans</i>	<i>1,907 families of 9,535 souls.</i>			
<i>Kooroomlees</i>	<i>3,452 families of 17,260 souls.</i>			
<i>Greeks</i>	<i>5,792 families of 28,960 souls.</i>			

*Translated from a document in the hands of Loyata, clerk of the Kooroomlees⁶².
Trebizond, 30 August 1857.
(Signed) Geo: Alex.^r Stevens.*

60. Πουλαντζάκιον; Bulancak, west of Giresun. See Document 8B.

61. Unidentified, presumed west of Bulancak.

62. Not named in the Greek petition of 15 July 1857. Nikolaos Λογάδης taught at the Trebizond *Frontisterion* earlier in the century: Chrysanthos, *Ἀρχαίων Πόντου*, 4-5 (1933) 735. He is not Mustafa Tursunoğlu the Yazıcı, or clerk, named in this despatch and the Greek petition as the Kurumli (Kromniot) representative.

DOCUMENT 2

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, November 10th 1857

No. 47/1857

sent home

[To Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe,
H.B.M.'s Ambassador, Constantinople]

My Lord,

I have the honor to report for your Lordship's information that in July last, I ascertained that some six hundred Greek families, chiefly Stone-Masons, Stone-Putters, Bricklayers and Builders, natives of Santa, a Village⁶³ in this vicinity, were about emigrating to Poti in Russia, where the Russian consul had promised them employment in the construction of the projected Harbor and Town, and, a grant of land and other privileges⁶⁴.

On the receipt of this information, I sought some of the most respectable of these people and although they did not admit the fact having reference to the Russian agent, yet, they declared their intention of emigrating to Russia unless they were properly treated by the Turkish local Authorities, against whom, I regret to say they have sufficient cause of complaint.

It appears that these six hundred families (about), live chiefly by their respective trades but as for many days in the year, they are impeded in their work by the inclemency of the Weather, they also deal in Dairy produce, for the latter, they are entirely dependent on a strip of grazing ground, held by them by Royal Firman, since time immemorial. Some years ago, an attempt was made by some Mahomedans of Messakhoo⁶⁵ to deprive them of the Pasturage, but the then Pasha of Trebizond, examined the matter and confirmed the former Firmans; they remained unmolested until June last,

63. Not a village, but, as Document 1 demonstrates, a group of eight settlements on the upper reaches of the Yanbolu Dere.

64. On the artificial harbour at Poti, on the mouth of the Hopi, see H. M. Admiralty, *The Black Sea Pilot*, London 1942, 377.

65. New Sincanmeseher, midway between Santa and the mouth of the Yanbolu Dere. The dispute, but not this incident, is described on Ph. Cheimonides, *Ἱστορία καὶ στατιστικὴ τῆς Σάντας*, Athens 1902, reproduced in A. Athanasiades, *Ἱστορία καὶ Λαογραφία τῆς Σάντας*, I, Thessalonike 1967, 58-9; but not mentioned in M. Nymphopoulos, *Ἱστορία Σάντας τοῦ Πόντου*, Drama 1953. The Mesehorlis were still ambushing Santalis coming up from the sea in 1879: see PRO F O 195/1238, despatches 4, 8 and 21 of 1879; and Bryer, *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου*, 29 (1968), 113-4. Note that document 1 reveals that there were only 615 Santali houses (330 "Greek") all told: the figure of about 600 emigrant families should therefore be treated with caution.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

when the Mahomedans again came and forcibly took possession, and the Greeks represented the matter to the Mejliss here, but not withstanding that the Cady and others of the members were ready to give a decision in favor of the Christians, the Pasha and the Defterdar, refused to allow the Ilani⁶⁶ to be made out, and the Greeks irritated at the treatment they had experienced found the idea of quitting the Turkish soil.

On becoming acquainted with the above facts, I lost no time in seeing the Pasha⁶⁷ and conversing with H.E. on the subject: I found H.E. firm in his resolution of not allowing the matter to be examined by the Mejliss, he said the parties must either divide the Pasturage between them or go to Constantinople, and then litigate with the Messakhoorlees, or procure a copy of the Defterkhaneh Kait or Certificate of Registry. I represented to H.E. that the Christians were poor, that they could not afford the Expense of sending a deputation to Constantinople much less that of entering into a law suit, exposing at the same time the danger of ill-treating the Christians, who I did not conceal from H.E. were contemplating emigration to Russia; all my arguments prove fruitless, and after consulting some of the Greeks concerned, I recommended their sending a Representative to Constantinople and seeking Y.L.'s kind interference, or if they preferred it, I said I would give them a letter of recommendation to Ahmed Vefyk Effendi, then Minister of Justice, with whom I am personally acquainted and to whom they could expose their grievance. They decided on trying the influence of the latter gentleman, and I furnished the promised letter, which a properly authorised deputy carried to Constantinople, and after a lapse of some six weeks returned here furnished with a Viziral letter ordering the Authorities, to have the dispute between the Christians and the Messakhoorlees examined by the Mejliss of Gumush Khane, the grazing ground appertaining to that district: — when the order reached Trebizond the Caimakam of Gumush Khane, Hami Effendy, was here, and I lost no time in seeing him and recommending the Greeks to him, and offered my advice on the question, begging him to administer impartial justice: — He gave me every assurance that the matter would be immediately looked to and I have every reason, as have the Christians, to be satisfied with his exertions to keep the promise, but receiving no support from the Pasha here, he has been unable to make the Mahomedan party appear in Court, and the Christians are in the mean time detained at Gumush Khane, I fear they will lose patience and that my endeavour to prevent their emigration may be frustrated. The Christians I

66. Announcement.

67. Besim Paşa of Trabzon (1855-58).

know, are in daily communication with the Greek Consul, through his Interpreter, a native of Santa, and the former is always ready to second his Russian Colleague.

I consider it my duty therefore, to bring these particulars under Y.E.'s notice, in case Y.L. may deem it expedient to call the attention of the Turkish Government, to the necessity of immediately ordering the Pasha here and the Caimakam of Gumush Khane to lose no time in examining into the complaint of the Greeks and administering justice to them, and I need hardly assure Y.L., that if such orders, could be sent through me, I shall use very effort to see them properly executed.

I have the honor to be & c

(Signed) Geo: Alex: Stevens
A /Consul

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 3

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, February 17th 1858.

No. 19/1858

sent home (To C. Alison Esq.

H. B. M.'s Consul General,
Constantinople)

Sir.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 5 of 4th instant instructing me to ascertain whether the Governor General of Trebizond has ever addressed his Government in the subject of the assumption by the Christians here of Russian protection and wishing to be informed whether His Excellency would object to your making use of his language respecting it.

I know that the Pasha wrote fully to the Porte on this subject on the 3rd of Iemadi-ool-aher⁶⁸, or a few days after my conversation with him, and that prior to that he had reported the affair of the Kooroomlee, (mentioned in my despatch No. 6 of 1858 to Lord Clarendon) but I verily believe that he would have remained silent up to the present time, had I not offered his advice on the subject, for I know from himself that he considers he has been badly treated by the Porte which has in several instances failed to support him in the discussions with the Russian Consulate.

During a private conversation I held with him one day, we talked of the Pasha of Batoom, and on my remarking that he was a friend of the Russians,

68. 3 Cumadiyel Ula = 19 January 1858.

For the saga of efforts by the Russian Consulate-General to induce Pontic Greeks to take either Russian passports or emigrate during this period, see, for example: PRO FO 524/12, despatches 60 of 9 October 1858 (Document 6) and 65 of 16 December 1858 (about 200 Russian passports issued in the previous two or three months); FO 195/678, despatch 13 of 7 July 1861 (200 families tempted to emigrate to the Crimea); FO 195/762, despatch 7 of 1 July 1863 (Russian solicitation of emigrants); FO 195/1141, despatch 14 of 3 August 1864 and 16 in FO 524/2 (50-200 families of Gümüşhane emigrate); and FO 198/14, despatch 43 of 12 June 1877 (Greek emigrant population of Apsos, near Pitsunda, rises from 21-120 families 1862-77, but begins to return with hostilities). However, by January 1868, W. G. Palgrave's report in FO 195/812 reveals that there were then in Trebizond only 343 «Russians (mostly Turkish subjects with Russian passports)» and 92 «Greeks (some fictitious)». These had been augmented by Septinsular Greek transferred from British to Greek protection in 1864. Two years before the Greek nationals of Trebizond had voted for their new King: 49 votes for Prince Alfred and one for Prince Napoleon, a microcosm of the full result: see FO 524/12, despatch 23 of 1862.

he replied, «what will you have him do? were he to oppose them, he would not be supported».

I do not think there could be the slightest objection, to your using the Pasha's language as regards «his post being untenable from the annoyance and interference of the Russian Consul» and that portion of it respecting the Kooroomless, but I am sure he would object, were you to make use of what he said relative to the Vizirial letters, — for he spoke to me in confidence and cautioned me as to how I made use of what he said, saying that one of the officials here (meaning no doubt the Defterdar, a highly talented but very dangerous man) had already accused him of too much intimacy with me.

The departure of Christians continues and increases daily, among the last who went to Kutais to take the Oath of allegiance are two Armenians of high station a certain Hezzia Mazloom and another Hezzia Agap — they are Merchants with endless dealings with Mahomedans and the latter are greatly annoyed at the step they have taken, knowing that on their return there will be no possibility of coming to any just settlement of Affairs they have in dispute between them. I am occupied collecting information for a second report to Her Majesty's secretary of State for foreign Affairs on this subject, and when completed, I shall not fail to transmit to you a copy.

I have the honor & c.

(Signed) Geo: Alexr: Stevens
Acting Consul.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 4

[FO 524/10]

No. 21 /1858

Trebizond, February, 22nd 1858.

Not sent home. (To C. Alison Esq.

H.B.M.'s Consul General,

Constantinople).

Sir.

Several British subjects⁶⁹ having dealings with native Christians (some of those enjoying Russian protection in virtue of a certificate of oath of allegiance recently procured in Russia), I beg most respectfully to solicit your kind and valuable advice, as to whether (in cases of dispute) I am to recognize the parties as Russian subjects or not. The French Consul tells me, that he will not admit the right of Turkish subjects to Russian protection.

I have the honor to be & c.

(Signed) Geo: Alex^r: Stevens.

69. It is difficult to know who these British subjects were, for the only British residents of Trebizond were the six members of the families of G. A. and F. J. Stevens (with ten protected Septinsular Greeks, one Greek and six Maltese). See FO 524/10, despatch 53 of 15 July 1858.

DOCUMENT 5

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, February 24th 1858.

No. 23/1858

Sent home (To C. Alison Esq.,

H.B.M.'s Consul General,
Constantinople).

By Hagee

Ismail

Tatar.

Sir.

I have the honor to report that information reached me some days ago, that great discontent prevails among the Christians and Kooroomless in the direction of Goomoshaneh, Baiboort, & c and that many families are preparing to emigrate to Russia on the opening of the fine season, in consequence of the liberation from the Trebizond goal of a certain Hassan Effendy a native of Off a village near Surmena⁷⁰. This person since many years the terror of the Christians in the interior and the supposed instigator of the Belliot murder some three years ago, is the chief of the Mollahs & Softas of Baiboort, Ballahore, Gumush Khana & c and a man of consideration and influence among his class: For many years, he has kept the Christians in the interior, in awe and oppressive subjection, and some years ago, I myself saw him in a tent near Ballahore, where passing Christians were compelled to get off and leave their horses, when coming in, and until out of sight of his temporary residence. Some five months since, during a hot discussion with a Mahomedan at Baiboort, he struck his antagonist with an iron bar and wounded him so severely that his life was despaired of.

He took refuge at Ballahore, and on the Caimakam of Gumushana sending to arrest him, he made his escape to Surmena — the matter was reported to the Pasha of Trebizond, whereupon information of impartial per-

70. Like Santa, "Οφις (Of) και Σούρμανα (Sürmene) were area, rather than village, names in the nineteenth century. The Ofius had very largely converted to Islam after the sixteenth, and probably in the seventeenth, century, but remained Greek-speaking (as some still are), perhaps explaining a nineteenth-century reputation, revealed here and still surviving, for Muslim orthodoxy and for the conservatism of their clerics. On the period, see H. Umur, *Of Tarihi*, Istanbul 1951, 157-61; on the Belliot murder despatches in PRO FO 195/448 and 528; and on the Ofiu phenomenon, see Bryer, *Neo-Hellenika*, 1 (1970), 45-46 (=CS, XL); and M. E. Meeker, 'The Black Sea Turks: some aspects of the ethnic and cultural background, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2 (1971), 318-45.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

sons well acquainted with Hassan Effendy sent an order to the Moudir of Surmena, to capture him dead or alive, he was arrested and conducted here and notice sent to Baiboort, inviting his accusers to appear, — they arrived here after a few days, but on finding the prisoner quartered in a fine room and every comfort and luxury provided for him, they at once perceived what the result of their accusation was likely to be, and certain of his acquittal, they preferred appearing as his friends and refused to prosecute: — He was consequently set at liberty and through his management a Mollah, one of his gang, who was also detained here as a prisoner for another offence, was also released. — The Christians, who looked upon his arrest with great satisfaction hoping they would escape his persecutions, were during his confinement preparing charges against him, but they also were afraid to bring them forward, and it is said he has threatened them with dire revenge for the intention they manifested towards him. On hearing of the prevailing discontent and intended emigration, I called the Pasha's attention to the subject. H.E. said, that he had no option in releasing the prisoner as no prosecutors had appeared against him — that he had heard he was not a very good man and that if ordered to do so from Constantinople, he would seize and exile him to Candia or anywhere else. — Could this be brought about, it would greatly relieve the Christians who live in dread of the man, and if the stop be adopted quickly, it may save hundreds from quitting the country.

The Defterdar Jozim Beg,^{70a} it is said acted as his friend when the Effendy was under arrest here, and those who are able to judge, say he was handsomely rewarded.

I have the honor to be & c.

(Signed) Geo. Alex^r: Stevens.
Acting Consul.

^{70a}. *Defterdar*: finance officer of the province. On 11 October 1855 G. A. Stevens had reported that «The *Defterdar* is an active man but decidedly dishonest, and the want of public confidence renders him unfit for the post of Administrator of the revenues». Despatch 32 in PRO FO 524/10.

DOCUMENT 6

[FO 524/12]

No. 60/1858

Trebizond October 9th/58.

To

The Right Honorable

The Earl of Malmesbury⁷¹.

I regret to inform Your Lordship, that the Russian Authorities in Georgia, continue to grant Russian Passports to Ottoman Subjects belonging to this part of Turkey, and that the Governor here Izzet Pasha who recently succeeded Raghib Pasha⁷², on their arrival from the coast with that Document which is presented by the Russian Consul, acknowledges them as Russians. I have tried to impress on Izzet Pasha in a quiet confidential manner, the necessity of adopting stringent measures to check the abuse, but H.E. has intimated to me that he is not disposed to give himself any trouble in the matter. It is impossible to state accurately the number of natives of Trebizond who have resorted to Russian protection within the last two or three months, but it can be fairly calculated at two hundred, chiefly individuals of the commercial and working classes, and with a few exceptions, all belonging to the Christian Communities. Last week a batch of thirty came over from Georgia with Passports. These are residents of Karahissar, Platana, and other parts of this Pashalick. The fact of their remaining unmolested encourages others to change their nationality. I cannot help remarking that many who have resorted to Russian protection have been driven to that step, to free themselves from vexations which the people in power here, very frequently inflict upon them, and unless the Porte addresses strict injunctions to its Governors to treat them less harshly, and at least to insure to them the benefit of the laws of the Country, which is entirely denied to them, it is evident that in course of time the entire Christian Population in these parts, will strip themselves of their Nationality, and invest themselves with Russian protection. Lately several cases of injustice were represented to me, such as innocent individuals being taken from their home and sent into exile, without a trial; the imprisonment of others equally faultless, frequently condemned on false testimony which they dare not refute. Merchants imposed upon by the farmers of the Customs, (a body of Levantines styling themselves Europeans), who are permitted to act as best suits their interests, not

71. James Howard Harris, Earl of Malmesbury (1807-89), Foreign Secretary, 1852, 1858-59.

72. Hacı İzzet Ahmet Paşa Hakkioğlu (1858-62) succeeded Ragıp Paşa (1858).

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

heeding whom they sacrifice, and a host of other similar matters, all which I duly brought to the notice of the Pasha unofficially, offering him advice, and endeavouring to shew him the evil such arbitrary treatment produces, but my good offices proved fruitless, and my advice rejected.

*(F. J. Stevens.
Consul, Trebizond)*⁷³.

73. F. J. Stevens, Consul 1858-67, first came to Trebizond in 1837, and succeeded his brother, Dr G. A. Stevens, Acting Consul.

DOCUMENT 7

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, February 12th 1859.

No. 3/1859

(To C. Alison Esq.,
H. B. M.'s Consul General,
Constantinople)

Sir.

I have the honor to enclose for your Excellency's information Copy of an Official letter addressed to me by the Russian Consul, on the 10th Inst. informing me of the result of an interview he had on that day, with the Governor of this Province, respecting a Kouroumlee, holding a Russian certificate.

In consequence of a private conversation, I kept to-day with the Defterdar, I have learned that the individual alluded to in the Russian Consul's letter, being a soldier who deserted the Army some time ago; was embarked yesterday morning on board the Ottoman S.S. «Brandon», and sent down to the Capital in Custody to be tried.

I have the honor & c.

(F. J. Stevens, Consul. Trebizond)

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 7a

*Copy of Enclosure**Trebizonde le 29 Jan. 1859 V.S.⁷⁴*

Ayant appris qu'un chrétien de Kérassunda, nommé Dimitri Pascaloglu, et porteur d'un Certificat Russe, avait été arrêté, mis en prison, puis battu et torturé, je me suis rendu aujourd'hui, à une heure après midi, au grand medjliss pour demander au Pacha-Gouverneur que ce Chrétien me fût montré, et que je puisse faire constater après un interrogatoire en dûe forme, et en présence de deux témoins à ce requis, les traitemens, qu'on disait lui avoir été infligés.

Le Pacha m'ayant répondu que ce chrétien est appelé à un service de l'état; qu'il doit l'envoyer par le plus prochain paquebot turc à Constantinople qu'il se refuse à me le montrer et à adhérer à mes demandes d'examen, je me suis retiré après avoir protesté, en présence du Pacha et des membres du grand medjliss, contre ses refus.

Je crois devoir vous faire remarquer, Monsieur le Gérant, que ce chrétien est réellement muni d'un Certificat Russe.

Or, jamais l'autorité Russe n'en a délivré qu'à des individus arrivant en Russie munis de Teskérés turcs, alors, est-il possible d'admettre que l'autorité mussulmane de Trébizonde eût délivré un Teskéré de voyage pour l'étranger à une recrue réclamée par l'armée ottoman!

Cette circonstance, qui n'a pu échapper à la connaissance de l'autorité locale, aurait dû, ce me semble, la rendre plus circonspecte; et, dans tous les cas, l'équité ne lui faisait-elle pas une loi, pour diminuer sa propre responsabilité, de consentir à me montrer le surdit chrétien, à l'interroger, et à vérifier l'exactitude ou la fausseté des bruits qu'on répandait sur la manière cruelle avec laquelle le prisonnier était traité dans son cachot?

C'est en votre qualité, Monsieur le Gérant, de représentant de l'une des grandes puissances chrétiennes, que je crois devoir vous adresser la relation ci dessus, et vous prier d'en prendre acte.

Cet homme appartenant à la classe des Kromlys, et s'étant déclaré chrétien, il y a tout lieu de penser que c'est là le motif de tous les mauvais traitemens qu'il a endurés; et que sa prétendue qualité de recrue réfractaire n'est que le prétexte de son enprisonnement. Agréer, Monsieur le Gérant, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

(Signed) A. L. Machenine.

74. 9 February 1859, N.S.

DOCUMENT 8

[FO 524/10]

Trebizond, May 5th 1859.

No. 6/1859

(To Sir H.L. Bulwer, G.C.B.⁷⁵

H.B.M.'s Ambassador, Constantinople)

The Pashalick is badly Governed: Our Pasha Izzet Ahmet is of the old school, totally destitute of education and without energy. The Christians have within the last two months suffered severe hardships. The subordinate governors subject them to imposition and ill treatment: all this would be avoided, if the Porte appointed an energetic Governor, who ought to possess honest principles.

I enclose translation of a petition presented to the Greek Archbishop here, by an influential Greek of Boulanjak, a District a few miles west of Trebizond⁷⁶. It contains the details of a truly heart-rending scene, which occurred a few days ago, sanctioned by the Mudir of Kierrasond: I addressed the Pasha a private note giving him advice in this much to be regretted matter, and impressing on him the necessity of his carefully investigating the affair. He has promised to do so.

The Christians styled Koroomlees have lately been tyrannized to a degree beyond all mercy: — Why? Because they made an attempt to establish their right to Christianity: — Old men, fathers of families were arrested, thrown into a dungeon and chained: — A plea was produced (on my remonstrating unofficially) that the Community of Koroomlees was favorable to Russia and refused to serve as conscripts.

I enclose Copy of a Petition the Koroomlees presented to me and my Colleagues on this painful subject: — At a Village near Goomushhaneh, inhabited chiefly by a Community of those same Koroomlees, and governed by a Mudir, a most disgraceful affair occurred during Easter, a number of individuals were thrown into prison on Good Friday; they were made to buy their liberty during the three days of Easter for two thousand Piastres: —

75. Sir (William) Henry Lytton Bulwer, later Earl Dalling and Bulwer (1801-72), Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, 1858-65.

76. Metropolitan Constantios of Trebizond (1830-79), whose own burial in a surviving tomb is described in PRO FO 195/1230, reproduced in Bryer, *AP*, 29 (1968), 104-5. Bulancak in fact lies west of Kerasous (Giresun), whose exarchy was transferred to the eparchy of Trebizond in 1698, although Bulancak itself was claimed by Chaldia as its corridor to the sea in the twentieth century.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Easter over, they were again arrested, and the bastinado inflicted to an unmerciful extent: I am assured that as many as two thousand blows were inflicted on one individual, whose life is despaired of. — My Prussian Colleague and myself have seen the Pasha, who says he will look into the matter, but his promises are made lightly and without an intention of keeping them: — At least I infer as much from experience!

The Defterdar is hostile to all classes of Christians, and he naturally advises the Pasha, who is unfit to decide for himself: — Thence arises all the mischief.

I have the honor to be & c.

[F. J. Stevens. Consul, Trebizond].

DOCUMENT 8a

Copy of Enclosure
Trébizonde, le 23 Mars 1859
4 Avril

A Mons. F. J. Stevens, & c & c & c

Les Cromlys soussignés ont l'honneur de vous exposer respectueusement ce qui suit;

Dès son avènement au trône, S. M. le Sultan Abdul Medjit, Notre Auguste Souverain, et le jour même où il seignait la couronne, manifesta publiquement par son Hatti-cheriff de Gulhané la volonté de voir son Gouvernement assurer à tous les sujets de son Empire, sans distinction de Classe ni de Culte, la sécurité de leurs personnes, de leurs biens, la conservation de leur honneur, et l'exercice libre de leur Religion⁷⁷.

Les Chrétiens Raja applaudirent avec enthousiasme la volonté Impériale et en attendirent avec confiance la mise en exécution par ses ministres; plus tard la promulgation du Tanzimat, et, enfin celle du Hatti - humayoun du 18 Février, 1856, ont confirmé et corroboré la Volonté et les ordres du Sultan si clairement exprimés dans le Hatti-cheriff de Gulhané⁷⁸.

Cependant, bien des armées se sont écoulées, et les rares modifications introduites dans le vieux système Musulman, pratiqué seulement dans quelques localités de l'Empire ont été loin de répondre à la Volonté de notre généreux Monarque.

Dès lors, voyant que les Autorités, qui nous administrent persistaient à méconnaître les prescriptions du Souverain, et notamment celles contenues dans le Hatti Houmayoun du 18 Février 1856, mais pleins de respect et de confiance dans les promesses et dans les actes de S. M. le Sultan, nous nous sommes déclarés, depuis deux mois et en présence de nos Autorités Chrétiennes et Grecs-Orthodoxes.

Depuis ce jour à jamais memorable nous avons été persécutés, injuriés, menacés et battus en présence de nos Autorités et par leurs employés.

Vous n'ignorez, Monsieur le Consul, que sous le prétexte de la conscription militaire, cent Cromlys environ, de tout âge, jeunes et vieillards, ont été dans la journée du 16/28 Mars, 1859, insultés, qualifiés publiquement

77. A fair summary of some clauses of the *Hatt-i Şarrif of Gulhane* (or *Tanzimat*) issued by Sultan Abdul Mecit (1839-61) in 1839.

78. The *Hatt-i Hümayun* was promulgated on 18 February 1856; the Treaty of Paris was signed on 30 March 1856; and the first Kurumli declared his Christian faith on 14 May 1856.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

des Giaours maltraités et jetés dans les Cachots confondus avec les voleurs et les assassins !

Que onze de ces Victimes Chrétiennes de tout âge, martyrs de leur foi religieuse, ont été envoyées à Constantinople par le Paquebot Turc Poursoud, en apparence pour être incorporées dans l'armée Ottomane, mais en réalité pour être punies de s'être déclarées Chrétiennes !

Que les autres Cromblys détenus ont été obligés de donner caution pour sortir momentanément des Cachots, l'épée de Damoclès restant suspendue sur leurs têtes !

Il est presque inutile, Monsieur le Consul, de vous entretenir des angoisses, des pleurs, des gémissemens du deuil de nos pères, de nos mères, de nos femmes et de nos enfans ; de vous exposer toutes nos plaintes, tous nos griefs, vous les connaissez déjà ; car tout s'est passé jusqu'à ce jour sous vos yeux.

En nous voyant placés dans une position si cruelle, nous nous sommes demandés, à qui nous pourrions adresser nos légitimes doléances ; car dans toutes les contrées où suspire un être humain l'opprime, la victime innocente trouve des défenseurs et des juges, mais, ici, à qui secourir dans notre détresse ?

Serait-ce à l'Autorité Turque ? Mais c'est elle qui a donné l'ordre de nous persécuter ; ce sont ses agents qui nous insultent et nous maltraitent !

Serait-ce à notre vénérable Chef Spirituel, à notre digne Archevêque ? Non, non ! Plutôt mourir que d'exposer le protecteur vénéré de notre foi et de nos familles aux fureurs du fanatisme et de la Barbarie !

A qui donc nous adresser ? C'est vers vous, Monsieur le Consul, c'est vers les représentants des Puissances Chrétiennes résidant en cette Ville, que tendons nos mains suppliantes !

C'est vous qui adresserez nos humbles prières à leurs excellences M.M. les Ambassadeurs Européens à Constantinople pour qu'ils daignent intercéder auprès de notre Magnanime Empereur, S.M. le Sultan, afin de faire cesser l'oppression inique et odieuse qui pèse sur nous ; afin de nous faire obtenir notre affranchissement.

Ce rôle aussi noble que généreux vous l'accepterez, nous en avons l'intime conviction, votre cœur éminemment charitable et Chrétien nous répond que vous accueillerez nos prières.

Nos bénédictions celles de nos familles aujourd'hui explorées, seront la récompense de votre paternelle protection, la seule digne de l'élévation de notre cœur.

Daignez vous permettre, Monsieur le Consul, en finissant, de vous exprimer le résumé de nos vœux.

Nous demandons, l'affranchissement religieux, Civil et Politique, des populations qui sont déclarées et qui se déclareront Chrétiennes ; leur admission immédiate dans le sein de la grande famille Chrétienne-Raja avec la jouissance des droits et légalité dans les charges et dans les impôts, des Chrétiens sujets de S.M. le Sultan ; si non l'autorisation de sortir librement avec nos femmes et nos enfans du sol, qui nous a vus naître, pour nous rendre dans telles contrées qu'il plaira à Dieu de nous faire choisir.

Veillez nous permettre d'ajouter qu'un nouveau Dénî de Justice nous réduirait au désespoir, dont nous laissons dès aujourd'hui, devant Dieu et devant les hommes la responsabilité à nos oppresseurs.

Telle est notre pensée, telle est notre conviction : tel est le dernier cri de nos âmes indignées.

Nous sommes avec respect & c.

(Signé) p. neuf Individus.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 8b

A.S.E. Monseigneur Constandios,
Archevêque de l'Eglise Grecque,
à Trébizonde.

Un sacrilège exécrable vient d'être commis dans la Ville de Boulanjak par l'autorité Turque locale.

Daignez permettre à un fils de l'Eglise dont vous êtes le vénérable Pasteur, de vous en exposer les principaux détails.

Daignez lui permettre d'implorer votre protection et votre appui pour obtenir justice !

le 1/13 Avril, 1859, est décédée à Boulanjak, arrondissement de Kerasunda, Province de Trébizonde, Kiriaki Savropoulo, ma sœur chérie, veuve laissant quatre enfans : — Suivant l'usage du rite Grec, le corps de la défunte fut enlevé de la maison par les soins de notre Clergé et transporté publiquement et en plein jour dans l'intérieur de l'église grecque, après avoir traversé le Bazar en présence d'une foule de Turcs, dont la terreur et la conduite furent irréprochables.

La cérémonie religieuse était commencée depuis une demi-heure quand un Zaptié⁷⁹ nommé Baraktiar Soniahli, envoyé par notre Mudir Rustem Aga, se présenta inopinément à la porte de notre église et s'écria à pleine voix : « Je vois, Je réclame le Cadavre ! Que les prêtres grecs, ici présents, se rendent sur le champ avec moi chez le Mudir ! »

Le plus ancien de nos prêtres, le Chef de notre Paroisse, lui fit observer avec une extrême modération que l'on rendait les derniers devoirs religieux à une Chrétienne, qu'on ne pouvait admettre son injonction au moins intempestive.

Le Zaptié Baraktiar se retira aussitôt. Peu d'instans après quatre Zap-tiés se présentèrent de nouveau à la porte de l'Eglise : l'un des Zap-tiés, nommé Islam et deux autres restèrent hors de l'Eglise ; Baraktiar Soniahli, seul osant pénétrer dans le Sanctuaire, se précipite vers les quatre prêtres Grecs, qui officiaient, et les somme brusquement de lui suivre immédiatement chez le Mudir.

En prononçant ces paroles Baraktiar tire à demi son hangir⁸⁰ hors du fourreau, et s'écrie avec la plus extrême violence : « Vous me suivez, ou nous vous égorgerons tous ! »

A peine Baraktiar avait-il prononcé cette menace lâchement odieuse, que

79. Zabitî : police officer.

80. Hangir : dagger.

le misérable porte sa main sacrilège sur nos prêtres, les saisit par l'étole, l'un après l'autre, il les traîne à la porte de l'église ; ou ils les consigne au Zaptié Islam, qui à son tour, les livre aux deux autres Zaptiés ! Ceux-ci entraînent violemment nos quatre prêtres chez le Mudir, en les accablant d'injures et de menaces de mort !

Ai-je besoin, Monseigneur, de vous depeindre la douleur, l'indignation et le désespoir de mes parents, de mes amis, de mes coréligionnaires à la vue des infames traitemens si barbarement, si arbitrairement infligés à nos dignes pasteurs !

Toute fois divers notables de notre Communauté, le Chef administrateur de l'Église et moi, nous avons bientôt suivi nos prêtres, et nous nous étions rendus chez le Mudir.

Là, sans aucun préambule, sans donner le moindre prétexte à son inexplicable conduite, ni à celle des Zaptiés, ses subordonnés, le Mudir ordonne à nos prêtres, revêtus de leurs habits sacerdotaux, de livrer, aux Zaptiés le Cadavre de la défunte Kiriaki Savropoulo.

Le plus âgé de nos prêtres, s'avançant aussitôt, et d'une voix grave et émue, lui fait les observations suivantes : — « Je suis depuis longues années le Chef de l'église Grecque de Boulanjak. J'ai toujours connu la défunte comme Chrétienne du Culte Grec ; ses parents, ses fils sont Chrétiens : tous les habitans de notre Ville savent que Kiriaki et tous les siens n'ont cessé de fréquenter assidûment et publiquement l'Église Grecque : pourquoi vouloir la priver des honneurs de la sépulture selon son rite, selon le rite de la Religion Grecque Orthodoxe ! Sur quoi vous baseriez-vous pour commettre une profanation aussi monstrueuse ! »

Le Mudir réplique aux nobles paroles de notre premier prêtre, en s'écriant : « Il est de mon devoir de faire enlever le Cadavre ! »

Notre prêtre lui répond avec dignité : « Vous ne pouvez point enlever le Cadavre d'une Chrétienne ! »

Le Mudir s'emporte, et crie qu'il punira les quatre prêtres très rigoureusement.

Ceux-ci d'une seule voix, protestent contres les menaces du Mudir, et, tous ensemble persistent dans leur refus d'obtempérer aux ordres du Mudir Rustem-Aga' ajoutant, « Faites ce que vous croyez pouvoir faire ! Mais nous ne céderons qu'à la force brutale et nous en appellerons aux hommes et à Dieu ! »

Ces nobles paroles durent produire un grand effet sur le Mudir, car d'un ton moins violent, il dit à nos prêtres : « Laissons les choses en suspens jusqu'à ce que j'ai la réponse du Caimakam de Kerassunda, à qui je vais en référer sur le champ. »

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

A l'instant, nos prêtres, les notables de notre Communauté et moi, nous revînmes à l'église, où la Cérémonie religieuse fut reprise et terminée sans aucun trouble.

La fosse destinée à renfermer la Cadavre de la défunte avait été creusée selon notre usage dans le terrain dépendant de notre Église.

Quel ne fut pas notre étonnement, notre indignation, lorsqu'après avoir terminé la fonction religieuse, nous aperçûmes un Zaptié de garde sur la fosse, qui nous déclare brutalement que l'on ne touchera pas au Cadavre avant d'avoir reçu la réponse du Caimakam de Kerassunda, et qu'il nous défend de l'ensevelir dans la fosse préparée !

Saisis d'indignation, nous dûmes momentanément nous soumettre à la force brutale.

Ici je dois, Monseigneur, signaler à votre attention, que le Mudir se trouvant très embarrassé pour présenter au Caimakam de Kérassunda, son Supérieur, un prétexte pour justifier ses actes plus qu'arbitraires, et les faire approuver, n'a trouvé rien de mieux que d'inventer un mensonge et il a écrit au Caimakam à peu près en ces termes. —

Une femme turque nommée Aiche vient de mourir à Boulanjak, les prêtres Grecs ont fait enlever le Cadavre et l'on fait transporter dans leur Église.

J'ai voulu reprendre le Cadavre ; les prêtres Grecs s'y sont opposés.

« Dites moi ce que je dois faire ». Les faits ainsi travestis aussi faussement présentés au Caimakam de Kérassunda, il est facile de présumer la réponse de ce fonctionnaire.

En effet, vingt-quatre heures après vient la réponse du Caimakam, conçue à peu près ainsi :

« Si cette femme est Turque, et qu'elle s'appelle Aiche comme vous me l'avez écrit, faites enlever le Cadavre, et faites-le ensevelir dans le Champ des Morts réservé aux Musulmans ».

Dès que le Mudir eût pris connaissance de la réponse du Caimakam il fit appeler les prêtres Grecs, le Chef Administrateur de l'église Grecque, les notables susmentionnés et moi, et nous déclara qu'il avait reçu l'ordre du Caimakam, attendu que la défunte est turque et se nomme Aicha, de faire enlever son Cadavre de l'Église Grecque, et de la faire ensevelir dans le Cimetière Musulman !

Nos prêtres et nous d'une voix unanime, nous protestons et nous jurons que la défunte n'a jamais été Turque, qu'elle n'a jamais porté le nom d'Aiché, et nous refusons de livrer le Cadavre.

Nous ajoutons : « Enfoncez les portes de notre Eglise, si vous l'osez ! Abusez de la force, mais à vous toute la responsabilité devant les hommes et devant Dieu ! »

Le Mudir au mépris de toutes les lois, au mépris de la volonté si souvent exprimée de S.M. le Sultan, nous déclare avec la plus extrême fureur:

Voyant la force brutale prête à nous écraser, voulant éviter de nouvelles profanations et de nouveaux malheurs nous nous sommes résignés et nous sommes retirés dans nos maisons, le cœur navré de douleur, bouillant d'indignation, laissant à Dieu le soin de nous venger, si la justice nous fait défaut!

À peine l'Autorité Turque avait-elle envahi notre Église, profané le Sanctuaire, que ses Agents se suèrent sur le Cadavre, déchirèrent tous les ornemens qui le couvraient et les lignes qui l'enveloppaient!

Des femmes Turques appelées par l'autorité prirent le Cadavre de l'infortunée Chrétienne, et lui firent subir tous les outrages que leur barbare fanatisme pût inventer. . .

Quelques instants après le Cadavre ainsi profané fut enseveli dans le Champ des Morts des Turcs. . .

Après un sacrilège aussi inou, j'ai nolisé une Sandale⁸¹, et prenant ma famille avec moi je me suis réfugié à Trébizonde, pour venir me jeter à vos pieds et vous exposer dans toute la sincérité de mon âme en votre qualité de Chef de l'Église Grecque Orthodoxe de toute la Province de Trébizonde, les profanations sacrilèges commises sur le Cadavre d'une Chrétienne, fille de votre Église, ainsi que les outrages faits à vos dignes fils, les prêtres de l'Église Grecque de Boulanjak, la violation de la dévastation du Temple de notre Sainte Religion. . .

Au nom des lois Divines et humaines, je demande justice.

Je suis avec le plus profond respect.

(Signé) Nicola Savropoulo.

*Sujet Raja du Sultan, propriétaire
et notable commerçant à Boulanjak.*

81. *Sandal*: rowing boat.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

DOCUMENT 9

[FO 195/812]

Enclosure No. 1
to Despatch No. 6

Trebizond.
April 17, 1867

Report
concerning the treatment of the Greek and other
Christian subjects of the Sultan.

My Lord,

With regard to the treatment of the Greek and other Christian subjects of the Sultan within this Pashalic of Trebizond and what adjoins it, I have the honour to give the following certain information, dividing the subject as beneath:

Firstly: Taxation.

This is in all respects the same for Christian as for Mahometan subjects; no special tax, duty, or fine being levied from any Christian as such, except the "Imdadeeyah".

The "Imdadeeyah" is a contribution of Twenty Government Piastres, being about Four Shillings English, per head per annum, levied indiscriminately from all Christian subjects capable of bearing arms, in compensation for the exemption they enjoy from military service⁸².

This is evidently no injustice.

The Christians occasionally complain of wrong done to them in the detail of its levying. But as such detail, that is, the distribution of the Sum exacted in gross among the individuals of the community, and the manner of exacting it, is left by the Turkish Collector or "Mukhtar" to the Christians themselves, that is, to their Bishops, Priests, and similar characters, the wrong,

82. Dues on Christian subjects were steadily reduced during the century. On 18 March 1845 they were (1) the annual *harac* poll tax, levied at 75 piastres for the rich, 44p. for middling classes and 22-3 p. for the poor (apparently) 25% higher than elsewhere); (2) a twice-yearly *Salian*, which fell on the poor and was much embezzled by collectors; (3) an *Angarya* impressment for labour or military purposes; (4) local fines and levies, and, G. A. Stevens concludes: (5) «There exists an imposition on the *Rayahs* which I am told exists nowhere else. The pasha sells to an individual what is termed the "*Spence*", the right of furnishing *Rayahs* with *Teskerehs* of distinction for which they pay annually three piastres a Ticket. The Pasha gives away annually this privilege for about 15 to 16,000 piastres and the taker farms it at considerable profit. See PRO FO 195/225 and Bryer, «Revival», 183, n. 59 (=CS, XII). By 17 February 1846 the *harac* (here the *imdadiya*) was reduced from 74 to 40p. for the rich, from 42 to 30p. for the middling classes, and from 24 to 15p. for the poor, and (pace G. A. Stevens) the historic *ispence* was abolished: see PRO FO 195/261, despatch 16.

where it exists, can only furnish just ground of complaint against the aforesaid Christian authorities, not against the Turks and the Ottoman Government.

Secondly; The administration of Justice.

Now there exist here four legal Tribunals. First; the grand "Mejlis" or Assembly, over which the Pasha presides in person. This is held three times a week, and contains among its members three Christians, one for each class of religionists, Greek, Armenian and Catholic. It is a Tribunal for higher causes, criminal or civil, and of appeal.

In this Tribunal, sufficiently impartial from its very organization, no legal difference is made between Turk and Christian; and the witness of either is equally admitted in every case.

Indeed whatever occasional injustices may here occur, weigh for the most heavier on a Turk than on a Christian. Because the former has, in matter of fact, no ulterior appeal, while the latter habitually interpose the authority of some Consulate, especially Greek or Russian.

The same remarks apply to the Second and Third, subordinate, Tribunals; namely the "Mejlis Istantak", and the "Mejlis Tejârat"⁸³. Of these the former takes special cognizance of criminal, the latter of commercial cases; and each numbers three of more Christians among its members, and is conducted on the basis of entire impartiality with respect to Creed or Denomination.

The fourth Tribunal is the "Mahkemah"⁸⁴.

It is presided by a "Mollah", or Legist from Constantinople, and has competence in matters which in Turkey assume a semi-religious character, such as the conditions of inheritance, and some forms of acquisition of land.

No Christian can sit as member in this Tribunal; the law followed is strictly Mahometan; and the witness of a Christian against a Mahometan is not accepted, though it is where Christians alone are concerned.

The reason of this difference between the "Mahkemah" and the three other

83. *Meclis Istintaki; Meclis Ticareti.*

84. *Mahkeme.* Cf. G. A. Stevens's despatch of 10 March 1845: «A great abuse exists in the Tribunals which calls for a remedy. A Turk engages in commerce with a *Rayah*, and a difference arises, the case is referred to the "*Mekemeh*". The Turk is allowed to produce all kinds of Testimony, but the Christian can only produce Turkish evidence. Owing to this the Christian is almost always lost. It happens very often that the Mussulman produces false witness against a Christian, which although known to be false is received as genuine to the great detriment of the *Rayah*. . . » PRO FO 195/225. The Roman Catholic mission was unable to testify when the Catholic (and Protestant) cemeteries of Trabzon were sequestered as recently as ca. 1970.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

Tribunals, is its being, in European phrase, an Ecclesiastical Court, and hence it is subject to the customary restrictions and inconveniences of such.

Appeal is however allowed from its decisions to the "Mejlis" or Tribunal of the Pasha, where the Law is impartially administered; and hence any injustice committed in the "Mahkemah" admits of rectification.

Thirdly; The free Exercise of Religion.

In this respect also the Christian subjects of the Sultan have no cause for complaint. A Firman is indeed required for the erection of a new Church, but so it is also for that of a new Mosque, and it is granted, perhaps with too much readiness, in either case. Bells are put up and rung⁸⁵, Crosses and Pictures carried about, and Ecclesiastical dresses are worn everywhere and openly.

Fourthly; The general bearing of Mahometans towards Christians in these parts.

It is, in a word, one of absolute and unequivocal toleration.

Of course, occasional squabbles occur here or there, and unmeaning menaces are made, more especially among the lower town-population, and sometimes in the villages. Such occurrences are often grossly exaggerated by those whose interest it may be to excite or magnify them. But they are really nothing, and tend to nothing; proceeding that is from foreign and artificial excitement, especially on the Christian side.

In fact, some very slight indications of a "fanatical" movement having been once or twice observed among the Mahometan population, the Pasha and the other Turkish authorities of these parts immediately and energetically repressed it.

The only approach to a grievance, and that of an entirely local character, within the last ten years, has been that of the "Kroomleeyahs", or inhabitants of "Kroom", a village about half way between Trebizond and Erzeroom, somewhat eastward. Here a considerable population, of about two thousand hearths, or ten thousand souls in all, and, it would appear, of Byzantine ori-

85. The rebuilding of churches was permitted after 1839, but it was often difficult to obtain a firman. Cf. G. A. Stevens's despatch of 10 March 1845: 'The Christians complain that they are not allowed to extend the size of their churches, although the Ground belongs to them, and that if they wish to build a house they must submit their plans to the authorities for approval, lest they build houses resembling forts. The Christians suffer another great vexation. They are often calumniated by the Mussulmans. For instance a Turk asks a favour of a Greek, which the latter cannot accord, the former spreads malicious reports against the Christian who is seized, flogged or fined without trial.' PRO FO 195/225. The building of new churches (with previously forbidden bellfries) became much easier after 1856. See Bryer, 'Revival', 184-5 (=CS XII).

gin, had for a long time past been publicly Mahometans and privately Christians. During the extension of Russian influence in these parts, which followed hard on the Crimean war, these families declared themselves altogether Christian, and many of them took besides a sort of Russian naturalization. This done, they declined to furnish any longer the military contingent, because they were Christians, or to pay the compensatory "Imdadeeyah", because they had been Mahometans. And for better security each man signed himself in the village Registers by a double name, one Christian, one Mahometan⁸⁶.

The Government of Constantinople decided, with agreement, I understand, of the European Representatives there residing, that these "Kroomleeyahs" should continue to furnish the military contingent as before, but should be in return exempt from the "Imdadeeyah". The reasons of this decision are obvious, and perfectly just. But the arrangement did not suit the Kroomleeyah, who, like most of their kind in the East, were not fighting men; and they attempted again and again to evade it. Considerable irregularities were the result; and sometimes, in virtue of their double names on the Registers, the Kroomleeyahs had not only to furnish the military contingent, but to pay the "Imdadeeyah" also. This was unfair; the local Governor or "Medeer" of Kroom is said to have pocketed the money. Recently the matter was laid before the Pasha of Trebizond himself, and the vexation was put an end to. But the Kroomleeyahs, not content with this, now demand exemption from military service, offering pecuniary compensation. For such change the local authorization is insufficient, and the case has accordingly been transmitted to Constantinople.

Three remarks may here be added in conclusion.

Firstly; it is precisely from Trebizond and the adjoining localities that some of the most startling complaints have emanated about oppression, anti-Christian fanaticism, and massacres threatened or even accomplished.

How far such complaints are to be trusted appears from the above Report.

Secondly; it is precisely in these same quarters, and among the Greek and Armenian populations, that foreign, and especially Russian, influence and intrigue are most real and active, rendering the Christians hereabouts habitually restless, and exciting the suspicions of the Mahometans. And

86. Although Kurumlis were commonly supposed to take religiously "neutral" Turkish names, some of the Turkish names of the 44 Kurumli notables who sealed the Greek petition of 15 July 1858, and of their fathers, are quite specifically Muslim (Mehmet, Mahmud, Murat & c); a common Kurumli Christian name (and church dedication) was Dimitri. See Chrysanthos, *'Agxiov Ilōrov*, 4-5 (1933), 718-9 and Fig. 110.

THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS OF THE PONTOS

should at any time some general manifestation of ill-will or outbreak, though of that there is at present no sign, occur, such influence and intrigue, and no other, will be the cause.

Thirdly; the complaints of the Christians, and especially of the Greeks, here at least, are unjust. They do not aim at equality, which they have already got, but at mastery.

I have the honour to be, with truth and respect,

*Your Lordship's most obedient
humble servant*

*W. Gifford Palgrave*⁸⁷.

To His Excellency

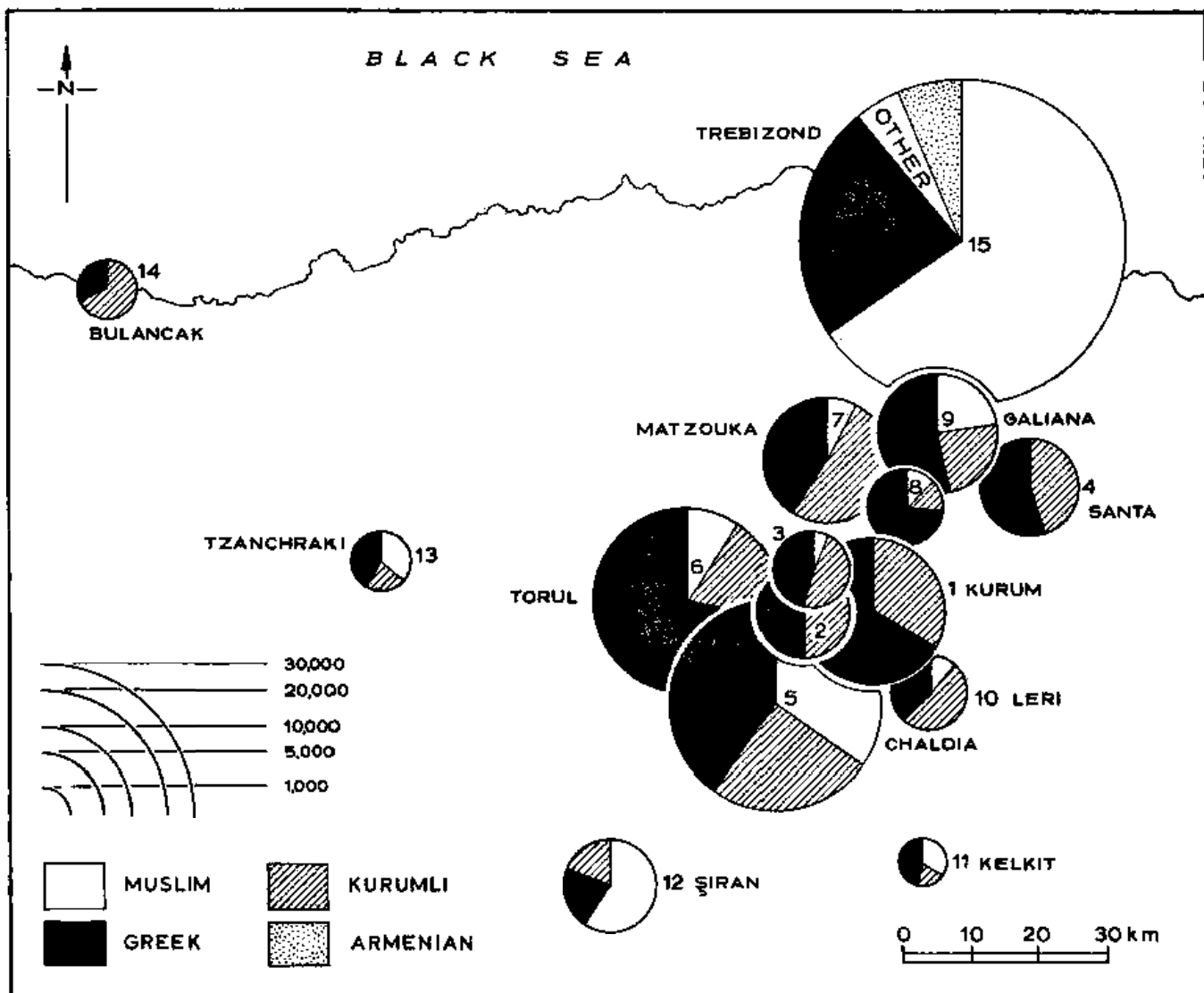
*the Rt. Hon.ble the Lord Lyons, G.C.B., &c. &c.*⁸⁸,

British Embassy.

87. William Gifford Palgrave (1826-88), Consul at Trebizond, 1867-73.

88. Richard Lyons, Earl Lyons (1817-87), Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, 1865-67.

Population distribution by ethnic group in Pontic Kurumli communities.



ΟΙ ΚΡΥΠΤΟΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΝΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ Ο ΠΡΟΞΕΝΟΣ
WILLIAM GIFFORD PALGRAVE

Ἡ παρούσα ἐργασία ἐξετάζει τὸ φαινόμενο τοῦ Κρυπτοχριστιανισμοῦ στὴν Ὀθωμανικὴ Αὐτοκρατορία γενικότερα καὶ εἰδικότερα τῇ μεγαλύτερῃ ὁμάδᾳ Κρυπτοχριστιανῶν, τοὺς Κουρουμλῆδες, ποὺ ἐμφανίστηκαν στὸν Πόντο τὸ 1857.

Ἐνδείξεις Κρυπτοχριστιανισμοῦ (δημόσια ἐπαγγελία τοῦ Ἰσλαμισμοῦ καὶ ἰδιωτικὴ ὁμολογία τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας) στὴν πρώιμη Ὀθωμανικὴ Αὐτοκρατορία συνήθως χρονολογοῦνται ἀπὸ τὸ 1338 στὴ Νίκαια. Σὲ ὁρισμένες περιοχές, ὅπως ὁ Πόντος, θεωρεῖται ὅτι ὁ Κρυπτοχριστιανισμὸς ἔχει συνεχὴ παρουσία ἀπὸ τὴν ὀθωμανικὴ κατάκτηση ὡς τοὺς πρόσφατους χρόνους. Τὸ φαινόμενο εἶναι δύσκολο νὰ προσδιοριστεῖ ὡς τὸν δέκατο πέμπτο αἰῶνα, ὅταν οἱ Ὀθωμανοὶ ὑπάλληλοι ἄρχισαν νὰ καταγράφουν στὰ *Tahir Deflers* τοὺς ὑπηκόους τοὺς μὲ βάση τὴ θρησκεία, στὸ βαθμὸ ποὺ αὐτὴ ἐπηρέαζε τὶς οἰκονομικὰς ἢ στρατιωτικὰς ὑποχρεώσεις καὶ τὸ διοικητικὸ τοὺς *status*.

Ἱστορικά, λίγοι μεταστρέφονται λόγω θείας ἐπιφοίτησης ἢ ἀπὸ θρησκευτικὸ ἐνθουσιασμό. Μὲ ἐξαίρεση ὅσους βίαια ἐξαναγκάσθηκαν, οἱ περισσότεροι προσηλυτίζονται ἀναμένοντας κάποιον κοινωνικὸ ἢ οἰκονομικὸ ὄφελος. Πρόκειται γιὰ ἀργὴ διαδικασία στὴ διάρκεια τῆς ὁποίας συνηθίζεται ὁ προσήλυτος νὰ ἀσκεῖ, κι ἐφόσον τὸν ἐξυπηρετεῖ, καὶ τὶς δυὸ θρησκευτικὰς τελετουργίες. Ἡ πολιτισμικὴ ἀφομοίωση ἀκολουθεῖ μὲ καθυστέρηση τὸ θρησκευτικὸ προσηλυτισμό. Ἀναλυτικὰ στοιχεῖα γιὰ τὴν πόλιν τῆς Τραπεζούντας ἀπὸ τὸ 1486 μέχρι τὸ 1583 δείχνουν πὼς δὲν ὑπάρχει σημεῖο ἐπιστροφῆς ὅταν τὸ 45% περίπου τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἔχουν προσηλυτισθεῖ· ἂν κι ἐνῶ ἓνας Ἑλληνας ὀρθόδοξος μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ Ἑλληνας Μουσουλμάνος μέσα σὲ λίγες ἐβδομάδες, χρειάζεται τουλάχιστον μιὰ μὲ δυὸ γενεὰς γιὰ νὰ μετατραπεῖ σὲ Τοῦρκο Μουσουλμάνο: τὸ 1583, 43% τῶν Μουσουλμάνων τῆς Τραπεζούντας ἦταν πρώτης ἢ δευτέρας γενεᾶς προσήλυτοι. Ὁ προσηλυτισμὸς καθυστέρησε πολὺ περισσότερο στὴν Ποντιακὴ ὑπαιθρο, ὅπου τὸ τοπικὸ ἔθιμο ἔνωσε τὸν ἀνεπίσημο Ἰσλαμισμό καὶ τὴν ἀνεπίσημη Ὀρθοδοξία σὲ χρησφύγετο τῶν Κρυπτοχριστιανῶν.

Αὐτὸ δὲν σημαίνει πὼς οἱ Κρυπτοχριστιανοὶ ποὺ παρουσιάζονται τὸν δέκατο ἑνατο αἰῶνα δὲν εἶναι μάρτυρες τῆς πίστεως ἢ ἐπιστροφῇ ἀπὸ τὸν Ἰσλαμισμό

στην Ὁρθοδοξία ἐξακολουθεῖ νὰ τιμωρεῖται μὲ θάνατο μέχρι τὸ Τανζιμάτ, τὸ 1839. Πολὺ περισσότερο προβληματικές εἶναι οἱ ἱστορικές καταβολές τῆς μυστικῆς τους πίστεως. Σὲ καμιά περίπτωση δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἐντοπισθεῖ στοὺς βυζαντινοὺς χρόνους, ἐνῶ στίς περισσότερες περιπτώσεις φαίνεται νὰ ὑπάρχει μιὰ τοπική, διοικητική, ἐξήγηση ποὺ συνήθως πηγάζει ἀπὸ τὴ φυσικὴ ἐπιθυμία νὰ ἐξασφαλιστεῖ τὸ καλὺτερο κι ἀπὸ τοὺς δυὸ κόσμους. Οἱ Κρυπτοχριστιανοὶ τῆς Ἀλβανίας (πρωτοενοπιζονται τὸ 1610), πιθανὰ τῆς Κύπρου (ἀπὸ τὸ 1571 ὡς σήμερα) κι ἴσως ἀκόμη τῆς Κρήτης (μετὰ τὸ 1669) εἶναι καθολικῆς καταγωγῆς. Στὴν περίπτωση τῆς Κύπρου ἀντιπροσωπεύουν τοὺς καθολικοὺς χαμηλῆς κοινωνικῆς προέλευσης ποὺ, μετὰ τὴν ὀθωμανικὴν κατάκτηση, περιῆλθαν σὲ ἀβεβαιότητα ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκδικητικότητά τῶν Ὁρθόδοξων.

Ἡ καταγωγή τῶν 17.260 ἢ περισσοτέρων Ποντίων Κρυπτοχριστιανῶν ποὺ διακήρυξαν τὴν πίστη τους τὸ 1857 (μετὰ τὸ Χατί-Χουμαγιὺν ποὺ παραχώρησε θρησκευτικὴ ἐλευθερία κάτω ἀπὸ εὐρωπαϊκὴ προστασία) κι ἡ μετέπειτα πορεία τους ἐξετάζονται σὲ ἐννέα ἐμπιστευτικὲς ἀναφορὲς τῆς περιόδου 1857-1867 ποὺ στάλθηκαν ἀπὸ τὸ Βρετανικὸ Προξενεῖο τῆς Τραπεζούντας (τὰ ἔγγραφα δημοσιεύονται στὸ Παράρτημα). Ὁ πρόξενος Palgrave τοὺς θεωροῦσε ἀπογόνους τῶν Μυρίων τοῦ Ξενοφῶντα. Ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι οἱ Ρῶσοι πρόξενοι τοὺς ἐκμεταλλεύονταν, οἱ Βρετανοὶ πρόξενοι ἐπεσῆμαναν τρία ἄλλα χαρακτηριστικὰ τῶν Κουρουμλῆδων. Ὅπως οἱ Χριστιανοί, δὲν ἐκτελοῦσαν στρατιωτικὴ ὑπηρεσία. Ὅπως οἱ Μουσουλμάνοι, ὀπλοφοροῦσαν. Σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς, δὲν πλήρωναν κεφαλικὸ φόρο ἀπαλλαγῆς ἀπὸ τὴ στρατιωτικὴ ὑποχρέωση. Μετὰ τὸ 1857 ἐξακολούθησαν νὰ διεκδικοῦν καὶ τὰ τρία προνόμια ποὺ τὸ Ὄθωμανικὸ κράτος τοὺς ἀμφισβήτησε. Στὴν πραγματικότητα, ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοὺς ἀναγνώρισε ἀργότερα ἀπὸ τὸ κράτος.

Οἱ Πρόξενοι δὲν σχολιάζουν δυὸ συντελεστές τῆς κατανομῆς τῶν Κρυπτοχριστιανῶν στὸ ἔγγραφο I καὶ στὸ Χάρτη τῆς σελίδας 68. Πρῶτον, μόνο σὲ μιὰ περιοχὴ (12) οἱ Μουσουλμάνοι πράγματι ξεπερνοῦσαν ἀριθμητικὰ τοὺς δηλωμένους καὶ τοὺς κρυφοὺς Χριστιανοὺς, ἐνῶ σὲ τρεῖς ἄλλες περιοχὲς (1, 1, 4) δὲν ὑπῆρχαν Μουσουλμάνοι ἀπὸ τοὺς ὁποίους θὰμποροῦσαν νὰ κρυφτοῦν οἱ Χριστιανοί: τότε, βέβαια, εἶναι δύσκολο νὰ ἐξηγήσει κανεὶς τὴν ἀνάγκη τοῦ Κρυπτοχριστιανισμοῦ μὲ μοναδικὴν βάση τὴ θρησκεία. Δεύτερον, ὁ Χάρτης κατανομῆς τῶν Κρυπτοχριστιανῶν τὸ 1857 στὴν πραγματικότητα περιλαμβάνει, σχετικὰ πρόσφατα, ὀρεινὰ χωριά, οἱ κάτοικοι τῶν ὁποίων προσφέρουν ὑπηρεσίες σὰν καρβουνιάρηδες ἢ μεταλλωρῆχοι στοὺς Ἕλληνες ἀρχιμεταλλουργοὺς τῶν ὀρυχείων ἀσημιοῦ τῆς Ἀργυρούπολης (Gumushane) στὴ Χαλδία καὶ στύψης τῆς Κολωνείας (Sebinkarahisar). Αὐτοὶ οἱ Χριστιανοὶ πρόσφεραν ὑπηρεσία ἀντὶ κεφαλικοῦ φόρου. Στὴ διάρκεια τῆς ρωσικῆς ἐισβολῆς τοῦ 1829, τὰ ὀρυχεῖα τῆς Χαλδίας ἐκλείσαν ἀφήνοντας τοὺς Κουρουμλῆδες σὲ διοικητικὸ κενό, ἀφοῦ στερήθηκαν τὴν καταγραφή εἴτε ὡς Χριστιανοί (διότι ἀπαλλάσ-

σονται φόρου) είτε ως Μουσουλμάνοι (διότι απαλλάσσονται ύπηρεσίας).

“Άλλες ένδείξεις, επίσης, πιστοποιούν ότι οί Κουρουμλῆδες δημιουργήθηκαν κυρίως από διοικητική άβλεψία μετά τὸ κλείσιμο τῶν ὀρυχείων τῆς Χαλδίας, τὸ 1829.

Τὸ 1866, τὸ Βρετανικὸ Ὑπουργεῖο τῶν Ἐξωτερικῶν, πού ἀνησυχοῦσε περισσότερο γιὰ τὴ ρωσικὴ ἀπειλὴ ἐναντίον τῆς βρετανικῆς ἡπειρωτικῆς διόδου στὴν Ἰνδία, στὴν ὁποία ἡ Τραπεζοῦντα κατεῖχε στρατηγικὴ θέση, παρὰ γιὰ τὴν τύχη τῶν Κουρουμλῆδων, ἔστειλε ἐκεῖ τὸν William Gifford Palgrave, τὸν πρὸ ἀξιόλογο πρόξενό της στὴν περιοχὴ, γιὰ νὰ ἀναφέρει τὴν ἐπικρατοῦσα κατάσταση. Ὁ Palgrave διατηροῦσε πολὺ στενοὺς δεσμοὺς μὲ τὸ πνευματικὸ καὶ πολιτικὸ κατεστημένο τῆς Ἀγγλίας, πού ἐκτιμοῦσε τὶς ἀπόψεις του.

Ἡ ἀναφορὰ τοῦ Palgrave εἶναι ἀπόλυτα καταδικαστικὴ γιὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνες τοῦ Πόντου γενικότερα καὶ γιὰ τοὺς Κουρουμλῆδες εἰδικότερα. Εὐκόλα ἀποδεικνύεται ὅτι μερικὰ ἀπὸ τὰ γραφόμενά του εἶναι ἀνακριβή, ἀν καὶ πρὸ ἐνδιαφέρουσες εἶναι οἱ ἔντονα χρωματισμένες ἀπόψεις του. Ἐξυμνεῖ τὸ Ἰσλάμ καὶ τὶς ἀρετὲς τοῦ Τούρκου «εὐγενῆ», ἀναφέρεται περιφρονητικὰ στοὺς Κουρουμλῆδες σὰν ἀποστάτες καὶ στοὺς ντόπιους Ἕλληνες γιὰ φυλετικοὺς λόγους.

Οἱ ἀπόψεις τοῦ Palgrave ἦταν τόσο ἔντονες, ὥστε ἀξίζει νὰ ἐξετάσουμε τὸ ἱστορικὸ του ἀναζητώντας μιὰ ἐξήγηση. Ἡ οἰκογένειά του ἦταν ἐβραϊκῆς καταγωγῆς (ὁ πατέρας του ἕνας Cohen, ὄνομα πού χρησιμοποίησε μερικὲς φορές) ἐνῶ ὁ ἴδιος μεταστράφηκε μέχρι καὶ ἑξὶ φορές στὴ διάρκεια τῆς ζωῆς του δίνοντας ἐξηγήσεις λιγότερο πειστικὲς ἀπ’ αὐτὲς πού ἔδωσαν οἱ Κουρουμλῆδες. Ἀγγλικανὸς στὴν Ὀξφόρδη, γίνεται Ἰησουΐτης ἱεραπόστολος στὴν Ἰνδία καὶ πράκτορας τοῦ Ναπολέοντα Γ' στὴ Συρία. Περνάει σὰν Μουσουλμάνος στὴ διάρκεια τοῦ περίφημου διητοῦς ταξιδιοῦ του διαμέσου τῆς Κεντρικῆς Ἀραβίας τὸ 1861-63 καὶ ἐπιστρέφει στὴν Ἐκκλησίᾳ τῆς Ἀγγλίας πρὶν τοποθετηθεῖ στὴν Τραπεζοῦντα, ἐνῶ παίζει μὲ τὸ Βουδισμό τοῦ Σιάμ καὶ τὸ Σιντοϊσμό τῆς Ἰαπωνίας πρὶν πεθάνει σὰν Ρωμαιοκαθολικὸς στὸ Μοντεβίδεο, τὸ 1888.

Ἡ Βρετανικὴ Κυβέρνηση ἀδιαφόρησε γιὰ τὴν τύχη τῶν Κουρουμλῆδων μετὰ τὴν ἀναφορὰ τοῦ Palgrave τὸ 1867, ἐνῶ παράλληλα τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον της γιὰ τὴν Τραπεζοῦντα ἀτόνησε ὅταν ἡ διώρυγα τοῦ Σουέζ προσέφερε ἀσφαλέστερη δίοδο στὴν Ἰνδία, μετὰ τὸ 1869. Ἔτσι, ἡ πλήρης ἀναγνώριση τῆς θρησκευτικῆς πίστης τῶν τελευταίων Κουρουμλῆδων δὲν ἐπιτεύχθηκε παρὰ μὲ γαλλικὴ καὶ ρωσικὴ, ὄχι ὅμως καὶ βρετανικὴ, πίεση μόνο τὸ 1910. Τότε, τὰ πλεονεκτήματα μιᾶς ἀνοικτῆς μεταστροφῆς στὸ Χριστιανισμό ἦταν λιγότερο φανερά ἀφοῦ οἱ Χριστιανοὶ τῶρα εἶχαν στρατιωτικὲς ὑποχρεώσεις, ἐνῶ παράλληλα ὑπῆρχαν ἐλπίδες ὅτι οἱ Ρῶσοι θὰ καταλάμβαναν τὴν Τραπεζοῦντα, ὅπως κι ἔγινε τὸ 1915.